

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 168 WEST 23D STREET NEW YORK

No. 740.

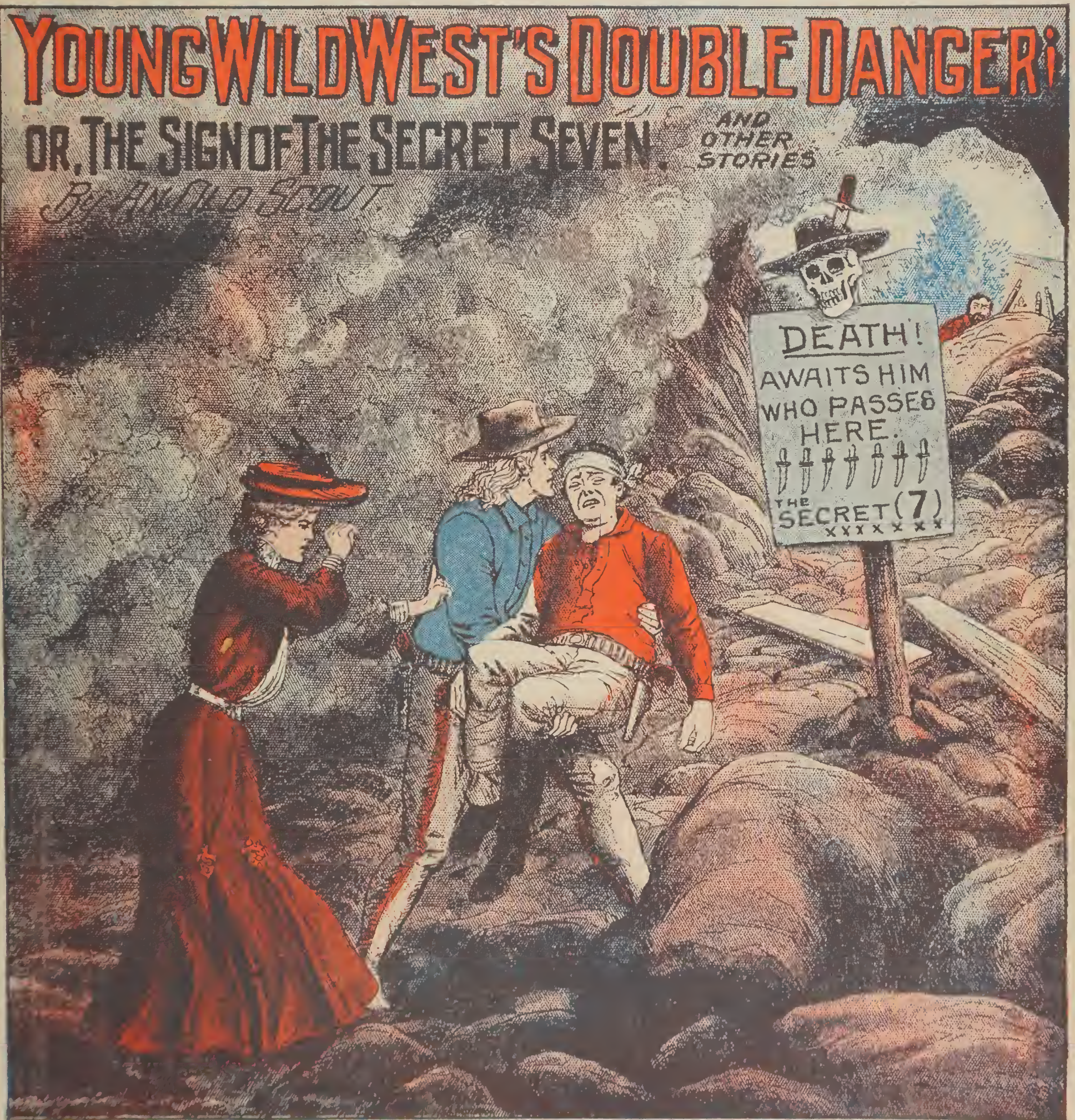
NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1916.

Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST'S DOUBLE DANGER!

OR, THE SIGN OF THE SECRET SEVEN. AND OTHER STORIES

By AN OLD SCOUT.



Wild bore the tenderfoot toward the flood of light, the girl following. It was an outlet from the mine, sure enough! The next moment they rounded a bend, and then right before them they beheld the sign of the Secret Seven!

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1916, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York
Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as Second-Class Matter.

No. 740.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1916.

Price 5 Cents.

Young Wild West's Double Danger

—OR—

THE SIGN OF THE SECRET SEVEN

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

WHAT BEFELL A BROTHER AND SISTER.

"Are you getting tired, Maud?"

"Oh, no. I can hold out all right, brother."

"Well, as it is the longest you have ever been in the saddle in one day, I thought perhaps you were getting tired. You ride well; I must say."

"Well, Al, I must, then, for a brother is not apt to compliment his sister unless she is really deserving of it. I am real glad that I insisted in riding from Deadwood to Weston, now, instead of coming over in the tedious old stagecoach. How many miles further have we got to go, do you think?"

"Not more than ten, I should say."

"That will bring us in Weston a little before sundown, then."

"Yes, at least half an hour before it."

The speakers were a young man of twenty-three and a girl of eighteen.

They were mounted on fairly good horses and were riding over the Deadwood trail toward Weston, which was situated a little to the south of the heart of the gold-bearing district of the Black Hills.

Both were uncommonly good-looking, and a single glance at them would have sufficed to show that they were not used to the ways of the Wild West.

The young man was attired in a corduroy suit and wore high-topped boots and a broad-brimmed hat, while the girl looked well in a brown velvet riding suit.

The couple were Albert Carey and his sister Maud.

Both had been born and reared in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana, and had been orphans for a period of about six months.

At the earnest solicitation of an uncle, who lived at the hustling little town of Weston, they had decided to come there and locate.

The uncle had offered Albert a half interest in a valuable gold mine if they would come, and his sister, being satisfied, the two had started for the gold regions, and as we find them they had less than ten miles to travel in order to reach their destination.

They had come to Deadwood by rail, and there they had purchased horses and sent their baggage over with the stagecoach.

It was a warm afternoon in autumn when we find them riding over the trail at an easy canter.

The spot was one of the wildest and most picturesque to be found in the Black Hills at the time of which we write, which was a few years ago when things were in a very unsettled state in that region.

Albert Carey, or Al, as his sister called him, wore a belt to which was attached a sheath containing a hunting-knife and a holster from which the butt of a heavy six-shooter protruded.

He found it was customary for men to carry such weapons in those parts, so he had purchased them before leaving Deadwood.

"The stagecoach can't be very far ahead of us now," the young man remarked, as he shaded his eyes with his hand and looked down the straight trail that was ahead of him. "It left nearly an hour ahead of us, but we have certainly traveled faster than the four rawboned horses could pull the lumbering old rig."

"That is so," replied the girl. "But I fancy that we will just about overtake it as it gets into Weston. Ah! What is that lying in the road, Al?"

She involuntarily drew rein on her horse as she spoke and pointed to a dark object stretched across the trail not more than sixty feet in advance of them.

"Whew!" exclaimed her brother. "It is a man, and a dead one, I should say!"

He rode on ahead and came to a halt before the body of a man with upturned face and staring eyes.

With a feeling that was akin to horror, Al Carey dismounted.

"Don't come any closer, Maud, until I cover it," he said. "It looks as though murder has been done."

Just then he caught sight of a square piece of cardboard that was pinned to the crown of a hat by a knife that was stuck in the ground.

On the card was a roughly drawn skull with seven knives pointing downward under it.

Al Carey looked from the corpse to the peculiar sign in amazement.

It was surprising, not to say horrifying, to him.

But he very quickly recovered himself, and taking a handkerchief from his pocket he laid it over the face of the dead man and mounted his horse.

"Come, Maud!" said he. "This is a queer case. We will ride on to Weston and report it to the authorities."

The face of the girl was very pale when she saw how agitated her brother was, but she did not entirely lose her nerve.

Without a word she rode past the silent form on the ground, and then putting their horses to a gallop, they rode swiftly along the trail.

They had not covered more than half a mile when a sharp command to halt rang out from behind a bush.

The next instant a solitary horseman appeared before them.

He was a jaunty-looking fellow and was mounted on a magnificent black horse.

He held a revolver in his hand, which he was playing carelessly with, and his face wore a smile.

"I thought you people were going a trifle too fast, so I concluded to stop you," the stranger said as the brother and sister came to a halt. "You are apt to run into danger if you go on ahead. Some robbers have just held up a stagecoach there, and they are now relieving the passengers of their money and valuables. There is no need of you two going ahead, because you would only be robbed, the same as the others."

Al Carey and his sister were not a little surprised at the way the man talked.

But he seemed to be a perfect gentleman, so they felt like thanking him.

The man on the black horse kept on toying with his revolver and smiling, so they made up their minds that he must be a very good-natured person, indeed.

"Robbers are holding up the stagecoach, you said," remarked Carey. "Are there many of them?"

"Only about six, I should say. More than you and I could contend with, I think. I don't like fighting outlaws myself. I never could see where the fun came in. One is apt to get a bullet in a vital spot and then he dies. I like living pretty well and I am going to stick to it as long as I possibly can. Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a low, but pleasing laugh that came from him, and then he urged his horse closer to the two travelers.

"There is a dead man back on the road a way," said Carey. "Perhaps the robbers you spoke of killed him."

"Perhaps!" and then the man laughed again.

Maude Carey was getting rather uneasy, and when the last laugh sounded she realized that the fellow was a villain.

But her brother had not exactly made up his mind about him.

However, if he had any doubts as to whether the man was good or bad they were quickly dispelled, for the next minute the horseman drew his revolver out until the muzzle covered Al's heart.

"Just hand over your money and valuables!" he exclaimed. "I will take it for safe keeping. The robbers are apt to get it from you anyhow, and I will take care of it and return it to you some other time."

"Ah!" exclaimed Al Carey. "So you are one of the robbers you spoke of, are you?"

The young man's eyes flashed, for he was anything but a coward.

"I didn't say so, my friend. But take my advice and hold your temper. I am simply doing you a great kindness and yet you don't appreciate it. The time will come when you will be very glad that you gave me your money and valuables, perhaps."

The old smile was there on the handsome face, and the robber bowed with what seemed to be real politeness to the girl.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Maud. "You surely don't mean to take all we have got in the world!"

"Well, I might allow you to keep the chain and locket you are wearing, but that would only happen for a consideration. Come, young man! hand over what you have got, and be quick about it!"

There was no mistaking the tone of the man's voice.

He meant business as much as any one had ever meant business.

Al Carey realized it, too.

He saw the finger of the robber playing with the trigger of the revolver that covered his heart, and he thought strongly of living just then.

"I suppose it is a case of compulsion," he said, and then he proceeded to empty his pockets.

First he handed over a well-filled purse and then his watch and chain.

Then, seeing that the road-agent was not satisfied, he took the heavy seal ring from his finger and passed it over.

"Is that all, young man?"

"Yes, with the exception of some change I have in my pocket."

"Well, hand that out, too!"

The rascal stroked the silky beard he wore and laughed as he said this.

Reluctantly, Carey dove down into his pocket and handed out the rest of his money.

"Now, then," observed the robber, pointing in the direc-

tion of Weston, "you can see that trail pretty plain, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Well, just let me see how fast you can travel, then."

"Come on, Maud!" cried the young man, thinking that perhaps his sister was going to get away without being relieved of her money and valuables.

"I am not through with Maud yet!" exclaimed the rascally road agent. "You ride on, or I'll shoot you as dead as the fellow you saw lying back on the trail. Do you hear me?"

"Go on, brother—go on!" shrieked the now terrified girl. "The villain will surely shoot you!"

"I won't leave you, Maud—not if I die for it!"

Click!

The robber had pressed the trigger slightly and the hammer of the revolver he held in his hand was raised to the first cock.

Then it was that Al Carey gave in.

He gave a jerk on the reins and his horse darted ahead.

But it was a smart slap on the flank from the robber that made the animal so active all at once.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the villain. "I thought it was time you moved, my friend. If you had not done so just as you did I would have shot you dead in the saddle!"

Maud Carey was now terribly frightened.

"I am not going to harm you, young lady," said the robber. "I merely held you back here so I could have a kiss from you: I thought it wouldn't look well to attempt such a thing before your brother. Now, just make up your mind that you are my sweetheart and let me enjoy the privilege of one sweet kiss."

He reached out and caught her by the waist as he spoke, and, with a scream, she strove to break away from him.

"Take it easy, my dear. You are simply making a fool of yourself!" cried the scoundrel. "Suppose some one were to come along? They would think you were acting very unladylike. Now, it is going to be a kiss that I will get from you, or I will shoot your brother! Which shall it be?"

"Mercy!" cried the frightened girl. "Have mercy!"

"Mercy? As if it would harm you any if I kissed you! Ha, ha, ha!"

He had secured a good hold about the girl's waist and he now drew her to him to make good his boast.

But at that very moment the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard.

It was not Al Carey coming back, for the sounds came from the other way.

The robber partly released his grasp on the struggling girl and raised his revolver.

Just then a handsome young fellow on a blooded sorrel stallion appeared on the scene.

"Unhand that lady, you scoundrel!" rang out in a clear tone of voice.

The robber was just in the act of firing at the newcomer when—

Crack!

There was a sharp report and his revolver dropped from his hand!

CHAPTER II.

WILD AND ARIETTA.

Less than an hour before Al Carey and his sister were introduced to the reader, and not more than three miles from the Deadwood trail, a handsome young couple might have been seen riding slowly and picking their way through a dense patch of chaparral.

A dashing-looking young fellow, who had not yet reached the age of man's estate, but who possessed everything else that makes up the true man, mentally, physically and socially, and a girl just budding into womanhood, with the perfect figure and a face that was fair to look upon—such were the couple we beg leave to introduce.

The boy—for such we will call him—was attired in a rather fancy hunting-suit of buckskin and had a pearl-colored sombrero tipped back rakishly on his head.

A wealth of chestnut hair hung over his shoulders, setting off the finely moulded features and dark eyes to the best possible advantage, and the pair of broad shoulders and full chest giving him the appearance of a well-trained athlete, the young fellow certainly made a striking picture.

He was armed with rifle, revolvers and hunting-knife, and

he sat in the saddle in such an easy way that he seemed almost to be a part of the splendid sorrel stallion he rode.

His companion was of the blonde type, her hair being a golden yellow, bordering on what is sometimes called red.

She, too, was attired in a hunting-suit of buckskin, and she carried a rifle, revolver and knife.

The horse she rode was of a snow-white and seemed to be quite as spirited as the stately and powerful sorrel.

This couple was Young Wild West and his sweetheart, Arietta Murdock.

Young Wild West was known far and near as the champion Deadshot of the West, Prince of the Saddle, Lasso King and the Boy with the Iron Grip.

Besides these titles, which he had fairly earned, he was called the Boss Boy Miner of the Black Hills by many.

The thrilling adventures that he had been through, along with his partners, were many, but in spite of all the opposition he had been forced to contend with he had made a fortune at the gold mines, and at this particular time he was spending his time in hunting for adventure in various parts of the Wild West.

Young Wild West had just returned to the mining town of Weston, which, by the way, had been named for him, and he had cheerfully complied with his sweetheart's request to come out on the mountain on a few hours' hunt.

Already the two had bagged a black bear, but they wanted a couple of haunches of venison to take back home with them, so they had taken to the thickets and were following a deer path at the time we find them.

"Et," said Young Wild West, as the horses picked their way along, "when we sight a deer I want you to be the one to drop it. I shot the bear, and I want you to even things up with me."

"All right, Wild," was the reply in a voice that sounded almost like the singing of the birds. "Let me catch sight of the deer and I will bring him down, no matter how fast he is running."

"I believe you, little one. I have seen you shoot too many times to think that you would miss a shot at a deer. But I guess we had better be a little quiet now; we are not very far from a pool where the deers and mountain antelopes go to drink."

A little further on they came to a little clearing.

Then it was that Young Wild West gave a nod of satisfaction.

"There's venison close by, Et," he said. "I see fresh tracks."

"Yes, I see them, too," was the reply in a low tone. "How far is the pool from here, Wild?"

"About three hundred yards, I should say."

"Come on, then. I want to pick out a fat young buck, if there is a chance to take a pick."

"Suppose we dismount here and go it on foot?"

"You know best."

"Well, that is the best thing to do."

"Then we will dismount. What Young Wild West says always is right."

"I am glad you think so, Et."

He smiled when he said this and slid from the back of his horse.

Then he assisted his pretty sweetheart to dismount, and pulling the reins over the heads of their horses they started off, leaving them standing there.

But the steeds would not stray.

They had been taught that when the bridle rein hung down in front of them that they were to remain standing, just the same as if they were tied.

The boy and girl made their way softly along the deer-path and soon found themselves going down a slight grade.

They were nearing the pool Young Wild West had spoken of, and both knew it.

Two minutes more and they got a glimpse of the water through the almost leafless limbs of the trees.

They moved softly about until they could see its surface pretty well.

Suddenly they beheld something that would have caused the heart of an amateur hunter to beat wildly.

Three graceful antelopes were approaching the pool from the other side.

Both saw the animals quite plainly, but neither of them raised their rifles to fire.

No! They were not that sort of hunters.

Young Wild West never shot any sort of game when it was standing still, unless it was a case of extreme necessity.

And Arietta had trained herself to the ways of her handsome young lover.

"Take your pick, Et," Wild whispered. "Then I will start them on the run. You will have to be quick, though, or they will get out of sight."

"I will shoot quick," was the reply. "I will take that fellow on the left."

"The one that is just going to drink?"

"Yes, Wild."

"All right."

The young deadshot picked up a stone that was lying almost at his feet and then, without any further ado, flung it into the pool.

Splash!

As the stone struck the water the antelopes leaped into the air and started away, with the speed of the wind.

Crack!

Arietta's rifle spoke and the young buck she had picked out dropped among the sagebrush.

"A fine shot, Et," commented Wild. "I was just the least bit doubtful of your getting him. You had to be quick to do it, I can tell you!"

"He was just about ten yards from the edge of the pool when I fired," was the reply. "I couldn't get sight on him any quicker, he was going so fast. All four of the buck's feet were off the ground when I pressed the trigger, I think."

"Yes, or he would have leaped high in the air. As it was, he simply dropped. Now, we will go over and get him. We have got all the game we want, so we will take a near cut for the trail and then ride on back home. It will be pretty near sunset when we get there, too."

"Well, we have had a lively couple of hours, anyhow," declared the girl. "I don't get a chance to go hunting with you very often, Wild, and when I do go I enjoy it all the more, even if it is only for an hour or two at a time."

They walked around and soon got on the other side of the pool.

The slain antelope was found lying on the ground, dead, with a bullet hole just under its left foreshoulder.

Wild bled the animal and then removed the skin and cut off the haunches.

Then they walked back to their horses and promptly mounted them.

The antelope's skin and haunches were arranged so they hung behind Arietta's saddle, the same as those of the bear did behind her lover's, and then they started for the trail.

They came upon it right at the spot where the dead man was lying on the ground, which had been discovered by Al Carey and his sister.

"Whew!" exclaimed Young Wild West, when he saw the grewsome object lying there with the face covered by a handkerchief. "What does this mean, Et?"

"There has been a fight, I guess," replied the girl, "and one of the principals went under."

"Ah! Hello! What is this?"

It was just at that moment that the boy caught sight of the card that contained the skull and the seven knives.

He quickly dismounted and scrutinized it carefully.

"Something new, I guess," he said, shaking his head. "I never saw such a sign as that before. Can it be that there is a gang of outlaws come to locate around here? If that is the case, I'll give you my word that they won't stay here long. We don't tolerate any outlaws or road agents around Weston, do we, Et?"

"No!" exclaimed the girl. "I guess not."

Being a thorough Western girl, and used to all kinds of scenes, Arietta dismounted and took a look at the queer but suggestive sign that was pinned to the hat by the knife.

"There are seven knives and a skull above it," she observed. "What can that mean, Wild?"

"The skull most likely means death," was the retort. "And the seven knives probably mean that there are seven men banded together to cause death. If it means anything at all it probably means that. But let us see if the poor fellow who went under is any one we know."

He pulled aside the handkerchief and the features of the stranger were disclosed.

"Looks as though he might have been a passenger in the stagecoach," remarked our hero, after a pause. "He was a tenderfoot, I think. By Jove! The stagecoach must have passed this way less than an hour ago. I wonder if it could have been held up? It looks that way, Et."

"So it does," Et replied. "This poor fellow must have put up a fight and got shot for his pains. Then the vil-

lains left their sign behind them. They must be a pretty daring sort of a gang, if such is really the case."

"Well, I had no idea there were any road agents around here just now. But the best way to find out all about it is to ride on and question the stagecoach driver when we get to Weston."

"I will move the body to the side of the trail and cover it with some cedar branches first."

This the boy did.

Then picking up the knife, hat and card, he placed them in his saddle-bags and rode off with his sweetheart.

The two had not covered much of a distance before they were startled by the shrill scream of a female in distress.

"Ha!" cried Young Wild West, drawing his revolver. "Et, some one is in trouble. Follow me, but do not keep too close. There may be a hot time in just about a minute from now."

Off dashed the sorrel, Young Wild West leaning forward in the saddle, his revolver ready to spit out its six leaden messengers at an instant's notice.

Again the scream reached the ears of our two friends.

It came from a point very close now, and our hero caused his horse to put on an extra spurt.

Two seconds later Young Wild West came in sight of a horseman with his arm around a girl's waist as though he meant to kiss her.

The girl was on horseback and was very much terrified.

The horseman was looking his way and had a revolver in his hand.

Then it was that our hero called out for him to unhand the lady, and shot the revolver from his hand.

It was a great shot that the boy had made, but it was nothing new for him to do.

He had seen that the robber meant to drop him, and being ready for him he sent a bullet that struck the barrel of the shooter and sent it to the ground.

As this happened, the robber released his hold upon Maud Carey.

"Up with your hands, you scoundrel!" cried Young Wild West, as he brought his steed to a halt within a yard of the villain. "Up with your hands, or I'll let a streak of daylight through your head!"

There was a certain ring in the voice of the dashing young deadshot that could not be mistaken.

The robber lost no time in obeying his command.

The still smoking revolver was on a line with his heart and he knew it.

"Why should you interfere with a man and his sweetheart?" the robber observed, controlling himself almost instantly. "A lover's quarrel should be of no interest to you."

"No! no! Do not believe him!" cried Maud, sliding from the saddle and running to Wild. "He is a road-agent! He robbed my brother and made him go on ahead. Al! Al! Come back!"

As might be supposed, Al Carey had not gone very far.

Just as Arietta reached the scene he came galloping back.

"So you are a road-agent, eh?" said Young Wild West, not noticing any one else but the man he had fixed his handsome dark eyes upon. "Well, I must say that I am real glad to meet you, sir! Road agents are just my hobby."

CHAPTER III.

WILD AND HIS PARTNERS DECIDE TO HUNT DOWN THE ROAD-AGENTS.

That the robber was a cool one was plainly evident.

"You are mistaken, young man, if you think I am a road-agent," he said. "I have simply been playing a joke on these two people. They don't know who I am, but I knew them right at the start, and I thought I would try their nerve."

"Well, if that is the case, I suppose you will be willing to give me back what you took from me?" spoke up Al Carey.

"Certainly. If the young man will permit me to lower my hands I will turn it over to you at once."

"Go on and do so!" exclaimed Wild. "But just see to it that you don't touch that other shooter you have there while you are doing it. I feel just in the humor to shoot a road-agent, and I don't care how soon you make me do it."

The villain made no reply to this, but it was quite certain that he saw how useless it was to deny any further that he was a road-agent.

He very coolly produced the money and watch he had taken from Carey and held them out to him.

The young man was only too glad to get the articles back.

"Now, then," said Young Wild West, "I would like to know who you are and where you hail from?"

"Well, I am not averse to telling you," was the quick reply. "I hail from Denver and my name is Richard Gold. My friends called me Gold Dollar Dick."

"Ah! Well, Gold Dollar Dick, have you ever seen anything like this before?"

As our hero spoke he got out the card with its ghastly emblem and the seven knives on it.

"Yes! I guess I saw that very card," said the robber, not appearing surprised.

"Where did you see it?"

"Down the trail a little ways. It was stuck to the ground with a knife right near the body of a man."

"Exactly. That is where I took it from. I suppose you know who put it there, don't you?"

"I don't know why I should. I am a perfect stranger here; I have never been in these parts until to-day, in fact I don't know how I possibly could know anything about the card. I saw it there, and I simply rode on about my business."

"Well, I guess you had better ride on about your business. I suppose you were bound for Weston, were you not?"

"Yes, that is just where I was bound, Mr.—"

"Young Wild West is my name,"

Wild noticed that the man gave just the least bit of a start when he said this.

That made him more than interested in the fellow.

"Yes, we will escort you to Weston, my dear sir," he went on. "It is the first time in a long while that I have had the pleasure of meeting a road-agent in this vicinity, and I assure you that I am delighted at the opportunity to take you to town and have you placed in the lock-up."

Gold Dollar Dick turned pale when he heard this last remark.

"I don't see why you are going to have me locked up, Young Wild West," he observed. "I have given back all I took from the young man; and, as it was only a joke, anyhow, I don't see what more you can want."

"Well, I simply want you. We have a way of making examples of all the men of your stamp found in or around Weston. It don't pay to let such fellows live; I have found that out."

The robber bit his lip, a proceeding that all our friends did not fail to notice. Arietta had engaged Maud Carey in conversation by this time, and on learning her name she was happy to inform her that she was acquainted with her uncle.

"He comes to the post-office three times a week regularly," she said. "I help my grandfather, who is the postmaster, and that makes me known by about everybody in Weston."

"Oh! I am so glad to meet you that I don't know what to say!" declared Maud. "This is a happy ending to what I must call a terrible adventure."

"Well, we'll be off for town now," spoke up Wild. "Come on! Mr. Gold Dollar Dick, you just ride on ahead and be careful that you do not get too far ahead, either."

"I suppose I shall have to do as you say," he remarked.

Then he rode off at a gentle canter, our hero following close behind him.

The rest came along in a bunch some fifty feet behind Wild.

"Isn't Young Wild West a brave young man?" asked Maud of Arietta as they rode along.

"There is no one living who is more brave than he is," replied the golden-haired girl, her eyes flashing to emphasize her words.

"Is he a relative of yours, or only a friend?"

"He is no relative, but some day he may be," retorted Arietta, who was not ashamed to own that she was the promised wife of the handsome young Prince of the Saddle.

"I don't wonder at your feeling proud of him, then," and Maud smiled and looked pleased. "I, too, have a lover, but he lives in Indiana, which is a long ways from here."

"Well if he loves you real hard he'll follow you out here," said Arietta, speaking in her frank and open way.

"Oh! He will come out here just as soon as he can settle up his business affairs in Indianapolis."

"May I ask his name?"

"Gerald Dent is his name."

"That is what we would call a rather high-flown name out

here in the wilds of the West; but it is a nice one, for all that."

Al Carey was taking in the conversation of the girls and he seemed to be enjoying it greatly.

It was the first time during the journey from Indianapolis that his sister had met one of her own sex whom she could talk to straight from the heart, and the young man was as pleased over it as she was.

He forgot all about what had happened, for the time, anyway, and began to picture what life must be in the mining town he was going to make his home at.

Meanwhile Young Wild West was keeping a sharp watch on the villain he was driving into town to the lock-up.

Our hero knew Gold Dollar Dick would make a break for liberty at the first chance and he was on the alert for any such attempt.

In this way they rode along until they were within a mile of Weston.

Wild could hear the girls chatting and laughing not far behind him, and just as they came to a fork in the trail Arietta called out to him.

Gold Dollar Dick turned at the same time Wild did to see what she wanted, and when he saw that Arietta had dropped one of the haunches of venison, he resolved to take the left fork and ride for his life.

The villain uttered a sharp cry to his steed and dug the spurs into his flanks at the same time.

Like a meteor, the horse darted away and before our hero could draw a bead on the robber he had rounded a bend and was obscured from view.

At first Wild was going to follow the man, but he came to the conclusion that it was more than likely that they would meet again, so he simply turned his horse and rode back to where his companions had halted.

"So you are going to let him get away, then, Wild?" asked Arietta.

"Well, I could run him down, I have no doubt, but I have an idea that I will run across him again before long, and then we will see who is the boss, him or I."

"I hardly think he will ever show up around here again," said Carey. "I guess he is more than thankful to get the chance to get away."

"You can't tell about that," retorted Wild. "He looks like one of the persistent sort; and then that card with the skull and seven knives drawn on it makes me think that he is but one of a gang that has come here to operate in the business of road-agents. If that is the case we will soon make short work of them."

A few minutes later they rode into Weston and Wild and Arietta escorted the brother and sister right to the house of their uncle.

The uncle's name was Dan Robinson and he had been very successful in the business of gold mining.

His mine was way at the outskirts of the town, but he lived in a two-story frame building near the center of it.

Of course, the miner was well acquainted with Young Wild West.

Every one in Weston was, and there were but very few who were enemies of the boy.

The latter dared not show their animosity openly, for they knew him too well for that.

He was a deadshot and that meant that they were likely to go down if they did not behave.

After leaving Al Carey and his sister at their uncle's house, Wild and Arietta rode over to the post-office, which was on the way home, anyhow.

When they got here they were met by the two partners of Wild, who were Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart.

Cheyenne Charlie was an ex-government scout and was tall and as straight as an arrow, with long, black hair and a mustache of the same hue.

Jim Dart was a boy of about the same age as our hero and one of the real products of the wild West.

The two were not only partners in business with Young Wild West, but they always went with him when he went away from home in search of adventure.

Like him, they were attired in hunting-suits of buckskin and their belts contained the usual complement of weapons.

"Hello, Wild!" called out Jim Dart, as our hero dismounted. "Did you hear about the hold-up?"

"No!" answered Wild, not showing so much surprise as they probably thought he would. "When did it happen, and what was it?"

"The stagecoach was held up about eight or ten miles out on the Deadwood trail and one of the passengers was shot."

"Ah! Well, Et, and I saw the victim, then. But tell me all about it."

"There is not a great deal to tell," resumed Dart. "The stagecoach was humming along at a good gait, when all of a sudden six masked men on horseback halted it and ordered the driver and passengers to hold up their hands. One of the passengers put up a fight and was shot dead. He rolled off the top of the coach where he had been seated, and then the robbers relieved the passengers of all they had and ordered the driver to go on. That is all we know about the case. It is plain, however, that we have got some work ahead of us, for we can't allow any band of road-agents to work around here."

"You bet we can't!" spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "I reckon we'd better git after ther measly coyotes right away, Wild."

"Well, after I have had my supper we'll take a little ride along the trail," was the reply. "I am very sorry to hear this, boys, for I had one of the road-agents a prisoner."

"What!" echoed the two in unison.

"I certainly had one of them, didn't I, Et?"

"You caught a highwayman, all right," said Arietta. "It is a pity that you let him get away, Wild."

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim were very much interested now.

Wild told them what happened on the mountainside, and when he had concluded they were more eager than ever to go out hunting for the road-agents.

A few minutes later Wild accompanied Arietta to her home, and after cutting off some of the bear and venison steaks he went over to the neat little cottage he occupied with Jim Dart, on the hill near the office of the Wild West Mining & Improvement Company, a company of which he was the treasurer and one of the heaviest stock owners.

The two boys had fine bachelor quarters there, preferring to live that way to boarding.

As they had a Chinese cook, who was first-class, they got along swimmingly.

Cheyenne Charlie was married and lived in another part of the town.

When Wild got to the cottage he found Jack Robedee, one of his partners in the company, waiting for him.

Robedee had a wooden leg, having lost his right member in a fight with cowpunchers some months before.

The artificial member was a wonder, in a way, since it was hollowed out so that a revolver could be fitted in it and fired by pulling a wire that ran up to his waist, inside his clothing.

Jack sometimes went on a trip with Wild, Charlie and Jim, but of late not very often, since he was somewhat hampered by the loss of his limb and was also the possessor a wife and baby boy.

Robedee had heard all about the hold-up, and hearing that Wild had gone hunting with Arietta he had come over to wait his arrival, thinking he would come home direct.

"Well, Jack," said the young deadshot, "there is something in the wind, I hear."

"Did you hear about it?" asked Jack.

"Yes, Charlie and Jim told me a few minutes ago."

"It must be a new gang, an' they've got lots of nerve, I think. There's seven of 'em."

"Yes, but I heard one of ther passengers say that there was seven at ther start. One of 'em, who was ridin' a black horse, went away jest as ther stagecoach was halted."

"Oh!" exclaimed our hero. "Now I know I had one of the scoundrels."

"You had one of 'em?"

"Yes. But come in and I'll tell you all about it. I am hungry and want my supper."

Robedee followed him into the house, where they were met by a typical Chinaman, who bowed and smirked at a great rate to Young Wild West.

Wing Wah was very polite at certain times.

The certain times were when he had been drinking a little too much whiskey.

Wild never allowed the stuff in their house if they knew it, so the moment our hero saw that the Mongolian was partly "under the weather" he put on a look of sternness and exclaimed:

"Stop that fooling, you yellow-faced rascal! Where did you get the whiskey you've been drinking?"

"Me no sabe!" and the Chinaman put on a look of childish innocence and crossed his hands upon his breast.

"You don't, eh? Well, I do. Now, if you have got any whiskey in the house I am going to discharge you."

"Me no gottee whiskey; me drinkec over to hotel, allee samce Melican man."

"You didn't fetch any here, then?"

"Only what me havee insidee," and then he looked so repentant that Robedee burst into a laugh.

Wild was forced to smile also, and when he found that Wing Wah had a good hearty supper waiting for him he let the matter drop.

While eating he told Jack of what had happened that afternoon.

"I reckon I'll have to load up my wooden leg," declared Jack. "I haven't had a chance to shoot it off, only for fun, in some time."

"Yes, you had better get it ready, for there is no telling but that it might come in handy before the road-agents are wiped out."

"It won't take me more than ten minutes to fix it."

"Well, go home and do it, then. Come back as soon as you can with your horse. We are going to take a ride out to the place where the stagecoach was held up. Charlie and Jim will be here at any minute, now. We'll wait for you."

"Good enough, Wild! I'm jist itchin' to git in a scrimmage with somebody. Putty work, I say!"

Jick limped off and Wild went to the stable where he had turned his horse over to the care of the colored man, Ike, who did the outside work and helped the Chinaman when he took a notion with his duties inside the house.

Spitfire, which was the name of the stallion, had been given a good rubbing down and he was now munching at some succulent hay.

"I am going to take him out in a few minutes, Ike," Wild said.

"Well, he ain't tired, boss," was the reply. "Dat sorrel never git tired, it done seem to me."

Our hero waited until his three partners showed up and then they all set out for the scene of the hold-up.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECRET SEVEN.

An exultant laugh came from the lips of Gold Dollar Dick as he rode away at breakneck speed and got out of sight of Young Wild West around a bend in the trail.

The villain possessed a horse of great speed and he depended upon the animal to save him from recapture.

But when he had covered half a mile and found that he was not being pursued he slackened pace.

"They are not going to bother with me, eh?" he muttered. "I suppose they think I am not worth bothering with, since I gave the booty back to the young man. Well, I am satisfied, if they are. So that was Young Wild West, was it? Well, he is just what I was informed he was, though I didn't believe it at the time. My! How quick he is with a shooter! And a deadshot, too! I have got to be a little careful, I guess."

He rode on a little further and then came to a halt.

After waiting a few minutes he started back.

Gold Dollar Dick was a pretty smart sort of a man.

He knew when he was down, and that was why he had surrendered when Young Wild West shot the revolver from his hand.

If he had been one of the stubborn sort at that moment it would have been all up with him and he knew it.

He rode back to the place where the trail forked, quite boldly, as he felt quite certain that our friends had gone on their way.

He paused long enough to note that the hoofprints of their horses went on toward Weston, and then he set out on a canter in the direction of the spot where the body of the slain man lay.

"Ha!" he exclaimed when he saw that the body had been removed from the road. "I wonder who did that? Well, never mind! It is all the same. I wonder what Young Wild West would have done if he had only known that I was the captain of the band of road-agents that held up the stagecoach and shot the fool of a passenger? He might not have allowed me to get away so easy, I'm thinking."

He failed to discover the fact that the dead man was there, covered with cedar branches, and then he rode along a little further and turned up a rocky ascent.

It was a little difficult for the horse to keep his footing in getting to the top, but it was only for about fifty yards and then he entered a thick patch of undergrowth and came upon a deer-path.

That he was none too well acquainted with the spot was evident, for he proceeded rather slowly and appeared to be looking for landmarks.

But after a minute or two a sigh of relief escaped his lips.

"I've struck the north way to the cave of the Secret Seven, all right," he muttered. "I could have come the other way, but I wanted to see if the body of the foolish passenger was there yet."

Five minutes later he reached a narrow ledge of rock that ran along the face of a towering cliff.

There was barely room for his horse to walk along this, but he did not seem afraid to take the risk, and holding a tight rein on the black stallion, he crossed the dangerous place in safety.

A sharp turn to the left and he came to a wide-mouthed cave that was hidden among the rocks.

Near to this was a bubbling spring of water and some horses were nibbling at the short grass close by.

Seated and lying about in the cave in plain view of him were five men.

A sixth was walking up and down near the horses, a rifle in his hands.

That this man had seen Gold Dollar Dick round the turn after crossing the ledge was pretty certain, for he gave a nod of welcome and kept on pacing up and down.

"Well, boys, here I am!" exclaimed the villain, as he dismounted. "I came near not being here, though."

"How's that Dick?" asked a big fellow with bushy red whiskers, as he got up and came out to take the black horse.

"Young Wild West caught me."

"What!"

Every man of them sprang to their feet, while the guard stopped still in his tracks and looked in surprise.

"Young Wild West, ther feller they say is ther deadshot boss of the West, had you, did you say, Dick?" the red whiskered man exclaimed.

"Yes, Jolly, that's just what I said. I was having a nice little tete-a-tete with a good-looking girl when he came along and spoiled it. He shot my shooters out of my hand and made me hold up my hands. He had the drop on me in no time, a fact which proves that what we were told about him was not a bit overdrawn."

"Gee whiz!" cried the red-haired man; "what do you think of that, boys?"

"Must be a rip-snorter of a boy," one of them said, while the rest nodded.

"Well, it makes no difference what he is," observed Gold Dollar Dick. "We organized our band for the purpose of coming here and doing business. We heard all about Young Wild West being such a terror to road-agents and outlaws, but that did not stop us from coming. We knew there was considerable traveling along this particular trail, and travelers are what we expect to make our living from. We decided to call ourselves the Secret Seven and to leave our sign around occasionally, so people could see it and guess a little. Boys, we are all right, and though we haven't been here but a couple of days, I guess we will do business here as long as we want to, Young Wild West or no Young Wild West."

"Hooray!" cried the red-haired man.

Gold Dollar Dick held up his hand, warningly.

"Not so loud!" he cautioned. "Haven't I told you that we must be very quiet? We are only newcomers around here, and we don't know but that this is a sort of hunting-ground for the people from Weston. I am inclined to believe it is, since Young Wild West and a very pretty blonde girl, who was in all probability his sweetheart, were returning with some game when they ran across me."

"Tell us jist what happened, Dick," said the red-haired man.

"All right. Just give me something to eat, and as soon as I'm through I'll tell you all about it."

The six men had the utmost respect for their leader, for they hastened to get him something to eat.

At the back of the cave there was a sort of natural fireplace and a fire built in this answered all the purposes, as the smoke went upward through a crack, there being a regular draught of air to take it, the same as a chimney.

There was a heap of live coals there now, and in a very short time Gold Dollar Dick had a nicely broiled venison steak before him.

Baked potatoes, cornbread and coffee added to this made it quite a wholesome meal.

There was not much in the cave in the way of furnishings. When the villainous band came there they had simply

brought blankets and a supply of provisions, as much as they could well carry on horseback.

The man who was doing guard duty when the leader of the gang arrived, had been the one to discover the cave.

He had been appointed to come on from a town called Spendulicks to locate a spot for a headquarters, and he being an adept at finding secret places had succeeded admirably.

This man bore the name of Sam Skink and he was Gold Dollar Dick's right bower.

"Red," said the leader, turning to the red-haired man, "go out and relieve Sam Skink. I want to tell my experience, and as you are the most inquisitive one of the lot you can wait till last to hear it."

"All right," replied Red, grinning as though it was a very good joke. "I reckon I kin wait. It is my turn to go on duty, anyhow. We was jest goin' to change when you showed up."

"That is what I thought. But you were so eager to hear about my experience that you made out you forgot about going on guard. Just let somebody mention a pretty girl and you are right off the handle, as my grandmother used to say."

"Well, I always did have a hankerin' after putty gals," Red answered, as he picked up his rifle and left the cave.

There was a laugh all around at this, for the man was about as ugly a specimen of humanity as could be found in a day's travel.

As soon as Sam Skink came in Gold Dollar Dick ceased picking his teeth and lighted a cigar.

Then he told just what happened after the hold-up of the stagecoach.

"It wasn't more than fifteen minutes after you fellows left when the young man and the girl came along," he added. "You know, I told you I was going to take a ride over to Weston to see how things were there, but I don't know what made me wait along the trail, unless it was that a presentiment told me that some one was coming along. I am sorry that I waited now, for the war between Young Wild West and us has started all the sooner for it."

"Well, we kin live up to our name an' do things secretly," said Skink.

"Yes, and we'll leave one of our signs every time we get in our work, too!" declared the leader. "We are the Secret Seven, and we are going to make our sign of the skull and knives be a terror to all who try to cross our path."

"Ther Sign of ther Secret Seven!" exclaimed one of the men, as he held up a card like the one our hero had taken from the ground near the body of the dead passenger of the stagecoach.

"That's right, boys!" said Gold Dollar Dick, rising to his feet. "Get out the demijohn of whiskey and we will drink to the Sign of the Secret Seven!"

The liquor was quickly produced and then all hands drank.

Red was not forgotten, either, for the leader took a tin cupful of the whiskey out to him and then, when he had swallowed it, he related his experience.

"Two gals, hey?" remarked the villain, his eyes opening wide. "An' both of 'em putty, you say, Dick?"

"Yes, both of them pretty. The one who was with Young Wild West is about the prettiest girl I ever saw. Her hair is something on the red, Red; but it is not like yours, though."

"Well, red hair is better than no hair, Dick. I reckon you ain't got much of your own on your head."

"That is so," and then Gold Dollar Dick removed a wig and false beard, disclosing a rather bald head and a smooth-shaven face. "I am glad you spoke, for I was going to wear my disguise to Weston to-night. That wouldn't hardly do, since Young Wild West saw me with it on."

"So you are goin' to Weston, then?"

"Yes, I want to learn what sort of a place it is."

"Take me along."

"Well, I guess I will, Red. I want some one to go with me."

"Good! Mebbe I kin git a chance to see them good-lookin' gals."

CHAPTER V.

ROBEDEE IS CAPTURED.

Young Wild West was bent on finding where the gang of bad men were located that night, if possible.

He felt that the quicker they got at the scoundrels the better it would be.

He rode along at the head of his three partners at a pretty fast gait.

But they had not got much more than a mile out of the town when they heard horses approaching.

There were several of them, as they could tell by the sounds.

"I wonder who is coming?" Jim Dart observed.

"We'll soon know," replied Cheyenne Charlie. "I reckon it ain't ther road-agents, though."

"No, it ain't likely they would come gallopin' into town like this," said Jack Robedee, as he straightened up in the saddle and held his wooden leg tighter against the saddle-girths.

Just then some whoops and yells went up, followed by a burst of laughter.

"Cowboys," said Young Wild West. "Keep to the right and let them pass. We have no time to get into any conversation with them just now."

The next minute about a dozen horsemen came in sight.

It was just getting dark, but our friends could see at the first glance that they were cowboys.

They were mounted on bronchos, and by the reckless way they were riding they had been drinking more than was really good for them.

They did not see our four friends until they were almost upon them.

"Hi, hi! Whoop!" they yelled, reining in their steeds. "Hello, you weary pilgrims! Wait a minute; tell us how far it is to Weston."

As the way was blocked, Young Wild West came to a halt.

"Just a mile, straight ahead," answered our hero.

"Good enough!" exclaimed the big fellow who acted as though he might be the leader of the crowd. "Which way are you bound, pilgrims?"

"We're simply takin' a ride for our health," Cheyenne Charlie replied. "Good-night! We're in a little hurry."

"Well, jest hold on! We've got a little whiskey left in our flasks, an' you fellers have got to take a drink afore you go."

"Excuse me on that, please," spoke up Wild. "We don't care for any whiskey just now."

"Oh!" cried one of them, who was the most tipsy of the lot. "What do you think of that, boys? They're refusin' whisky what's ther best that kin be bought in seven States. I don't allow anyone to refuse me when I ax 'em to drink. Now, young feller, I want you to take a drink, an' don't swaller all in ther flask, either, 'cause I want another pull at it myself afore we strike a whiskey-mill!"

He pushed the flask under Jim's nose as he finished speaking, and, becoming exasperated, the boy knocked it from his hand.

The cowboy let out a roar like that of a savage bull and aimed a blow at the head of Jim.

"Hold on!" cried Young Wild West, in a ringing tone. "Stop right where you are!"

A silence followed the command.

The cowboys were evidently not used to be talked to in that way.

"You fellows go on about your business," went on our hero in his cool and easy way. "But take my advice and behave yourselves when you get into Weston."

"Who in thunder are you, young feller?" said the big leader, riding up to Wild.

"Well, I don't know as it makes any difference who I am; but I am just telling you fellows something for your own good, that's all."

"Oh! You are, hey?"

"That is what I said, my friend."

"Well, how would you like me to pull your nose fur yer?"

"Don't try anything like that, please."

"I will try it!"

Suiting the action to the words, the cowboys made a grab for the boy's nose.

But he did not reach it.

Instead he received a stinging blow on the forehead which nearly sent him from the saddle.

Then a fist fight on horseback began.

It was something entirely new, and both our friends and the cowboys got out of the way, so the contestants could have full sway.

For a wonder, the leader of the gang did not attempt to draw a weapon.

Perhaps he thought he only had a boy to deal with, and that it would be a shame to shoot him.

Anyhow, he started right in with his fists.

He got as close as he could to Wild's horse and then let go several blows.

But they only landed on the empty air.

Wild, however, waited for a good chance.

He meant to knock the fellow from the back of his horse and give him enough at the same time.

Biff!

The cowboy sent out a right swing that hit the corral a glancing blow on the neck.

Spittfire did not like to be hit, so he whirled around and let both heels go into the cowboy's horse.

The animal plunged forward and, losing his balance, the big rider lunged toward our hero.

Spat!

Wild's fist caught him squarely between the eyes and knocked him back into position.

Biff!

A left hook caught him on the point of the jaw and down he went head-first to the ground.

Both horses were now prancing wildly about, and being released, the broncho suddenly darted away.

Our hero quickly calmed the sorrel.

"Are you fellows going to let us pass?" he asked.

Crack!

The fellow who had tackled Jim sent a bullet flying about a foot over Wild's hat.

He was going to fire another shot when Jim knocked the weapon from his hand.

Then he hit him a heavy blow behind the ear and he went to the ground to join the leader of the gang.

"Whoopee!" yelled Cheyenne Charlie, who could contain himself no longer. "Look out, you measly coyotes! I'm goin' to let myself loose!"

Then the scout began letting blows go right and left, his horse carrying him through the ranks of the men.

Three of them went down in short order and then the rest drew their revolvers.

"The first man who shoots will die!" exclaimed Young Wild West, whipping out both of his shooters. "I mean what I say!"

Again there was a short silence.

The cowboys began to understand that they had made a mistake in bothering with the four.

The leader now got upon his feet.

He drew a knife from his belt and raised it to make a rush at Young Wild West.

He was right close to Jack Robedee and on the side where his wooden leg was.

Jack quickly raised the wooden member and touched the knife with it.

At the same time he pulled the wire that connected with the revolver inside the artificial member.

Crack!

A sharp report rang out and the knife went flying from the cowboy's hand.

A simultaneous cry of amazement went up from the cowboys.

It had all been done very quickly, but they had seen the flash come from the wooden leg and they knew that the bullet that sent the knife flying had come from it.

That was a little too much for them.

"Come on!" yelled one. "When they git to shootin' from their feet it is time to quit, boys!"

Wild and his partners could not help laughing.

The cowboys began making themselves scarce right away.

Those who were mounted galloped off, and those on the ground ran for their horses.

"I guess we will go on about our business," said our hero, and he rode off, followed by his friends.

The cowboys did not even look back, but hastened from the spot as fast as they could.

"I guess they got about all they wanted," said Wild, with a laugh. "Jack, it was your wooden leg that capped the climax. It was a good thing that you got a chance to fire as you did, though, for I have an idea that some one might have got hurt if they had not become frightened."

"When they get sober they will feel sorry for what they did, anyhow," spoke up Jim.

"Well, I've only got one leg that's alive all ther time, but ther other one gits alive once in a while, an' when it does nt does sometin'!" exclaimed Robedee.

They rode on through the gathering darkness and the miles were rapidly covered.

In due time they arrived at the spot where the body of the man lay concealed by the cedar boughs.

"I guess the best thing we can do with this is to bury it," said our hero. "The poor fellow seems to have had no friends among the passengers of the stagecoach."

"That's right," answered Charlie. "It won't be ther first one we've covered up."

They searched about and soon found a hollow, sandy spot, and then they quickly dug a shallow grave and carried the remains to it and laid it gently in.

Then, with bared heads, they covered the grave and marked the spot with a stone.

"That is the best we can do for him," said Wild. "If his friends happen to come we will be able to show them where he is buried."

Wild had the sign bearing the skull and knives and also the knife and hat still in his possession.

"Now, then," said he, "we will hunt for the scoundrels who did this."

"Well, just tell us what to do, then," spoke up the scout.

"Well, I suppose we had better make this a sort of temporary headquarters and leave Jack in charge of our horses while we strike out in different directions on foot and try and find the hang-out of the road-agents. This seems to be the only clue we have got, and that makes me feel as though we ought to start from here."

"All right," answered Jack, "I'll go right in ther bushes over there an' keep ther horses out of sight of ther trail till you come back. I ain't no good to go trampin' around over rocks an' among bushes, anyhow."

It was soon decided that they should start out in different directions and follow the first path they chanced to come across.

They had soon disappeared, so Jack sat down on the ground to wait.

He was quite satisfied to stay there and watch the horses, since he knew he could not do much in the way of getting along on foot through the bushes.

Those days were over for him.

"When a feller has to go around with a wooden leg he ain't got much chance of doin' any scoutin'," he thought. "I've had my time, though, at that kind of business, an' I s'pose I've got to be satisfied."

Jack sat there for perhaps fifteen minutes without hearing a sound out of the ordinary.

Then he suddenly heard footsteps approaching.

That there were more than one man coming he could readily understand by the sounds.

At first he thought it must be his companions returning, but it occurred to him that as they had started off in different directions it would hardly be possible that they should all return together.

The next minute he knew to a certainty that it was not them.

Three men came out of the bushes and started right for the spot where he was hiding.

They halted at a tree before they got to him, though, and then one of them said:

"I guess here is the place. We'll put our sign on this tree. What do you say?"

"Good enough!"

"Just the thing!"

These were the answers he got.

Jack nodded and chuckled softly to himself.

He was now more than satisfied at having remained there to watch the horses.

He listened and heard the men tack something to the tree, and then, when they had gone away, he arose to his feet.

"I want to see what that sign is," he thought. "I'll bet it is jest like ther one Wild found."

He waited a couple of minutes, and then stepped out and approached the tree.

There was something white upon it that he could plainly see through the darkness.

Jack was very curious now.

The receding footsteps of the three men had died out entirely, and he felt that he must see what was on the card without further delay.

"I reckon I'll light a match," he muttered. "It'll be safe enough, I guess. Them fellers have lit out somewhere, an' there's nothin' to bring 'em back here again. Jove! If it wasn't fur this wooden leg I could have follered 'em an' learned where they are hangin' out."

Just then one of the horses came out on the trail. It was his own, and it had come out probably because Jack had done so.

He led the animal back into the bushes, and then stepped out to the tree again.

Producing the match safe that he always carried in his pocket, he took a match from it and struck it.

Then he held it up before the square white object the three men had tacked to the tree.

There was a skull and seven knives drawn upon it, sure enough.

"So that is ther sign, is it?" muttered Robedee.

He let the match fall from his hand and was just stepping back when a startling thing took place.

His arms were caught in a vise-like grip and he was thrown to the ground.

"If you holler out you'll git a knife between your ribs!" said a voice.

Jack thought it best to remain silent.

"Hanged if he ain't got a wooden leg!" another voice exclaimed. "That's putty good, ain't it? A wooden-legged man readin' ther Sign of ther Sacred Seven jest after it is put up!"

"I should reckon so!" remarked a third. "It's a good thing we come back. I knowed ther sign wasn't put on ther tree upside down, but you fellers said it was, an' I give in to yer. What will we do with this feller—knife him an' put ther sign on him?"

"I think it would be a good idea to take him to our quarters," replied the man who had spoken second.

"Yes, an' let ther captain have a talk with him when he gits back," remarked the other.

"All right. You fellers had your own way before, so you kin have it now. Jest right him up an' we'll tie his arms an' fix him so he can't cry out."

In a very short space of time Jack's arms were bound to his sides and a cotton handkerchief was tied in his mouth, so he could not speak.

Then the three members of the road agent band marched him off in the direction of their quarters, not noticing that there were four horses behind the bushes.

CHAPTER VI.

GOLD DOLLAR DICK IN WESTON.

Gold Dollar Dick carefully changed his attire before setting out for Weston.

He knew he had a sharp one to deal with when he came in contact with Young Wild West.

"I reckon there ain't much use of me changin' my looks any," remarked the red-haired man who was to accompany him.

"No, unless you cut off that shock of hair. If you are seen once by any one, I'll guarantee that they will know you the next time they set eyes on you."

"I take that as a compliment, Dick," said Red, laughing. "I know I'm a putty good looker, an' my beauty is what impresses folks, especially ther females."

All hands laughed at this remark.

There was considerable humor in Red, even if he was the ugliest in appearance of the Secret Seven.

When they were ready to go, the leader turned to those who were to remain at the cave and said:

"I think it would be a good idea for some of you to go over to the trail where the man was shot to-day and put up one of our signs on a tree. Young Wild West took the other one, you know. There is about a dozen left yet. You will find them lying in that little niche back there."

"All right," answered Sam Skink. "I'll attend to it personally, Dick."

It happened that Gold Dollar Dick and Red did not start from the cave until just after Young Wild West and his partners had passed the spot where they came out on the trail that led into Weston.

But if they had met it would not have mattered, since the leader of the Secret Seven had changed his appearance wonderfully and was very clever at changing his voice.

Gold Dollar Dick did not ride the fine black horse, either. He had mounted a clean-limbed roan, which was one of the half a dozen extra horses the villains had.

The band of seven had been organized for the express purpose of robbing unsuspecting travelers, and as they pro-

posed to keep their whereabouts and movements a secret from the outside world, they called the band the Secret Seven.

But Gold Dollar Dick was one of the daring kind, and he liked to be very sensational.

Hence he formulated the plan to put up a sign every time he took the notion, just to keep the common run of mortals wondering.

It was a great scheme, he thought, as the seven knives meant the seven members of the band and the skull was the emblem of death, which was what those opposed to them might expect if they interfered with them.

"Now, Red," said the leader, "we will give it out that we have just arrived from Deadwood. My name will be Richard Gold and yours will be Red, the same as it is, anyhow. We will act just as though we came to Weston to stay, and we will try to make as many friends as possible."

"All right, Dick. You kin count on me to do my part all right. I know jest how to act."

"I guess you do, Red. If I hadn't thought so I would not have allowed you to come with me. Just for the fun of the thing, we will stay overnight, and in the morning you may get a chance to look at the two young ladies I told you about."

"Good enough! That'll jest suit me!" and the ugly looking villain really appeared to be delighted.

The two rode on until they were within a couple of miles of the town.

Then they put their horses on a swift gallop to make it appear that they had journeyed a longer distance than what they had.

They slackened their pace the moment they entered the town, of course, and as they rode up the principal street, Gold Dollar Dick looked around for a saloon or hotel that would strike his fancy.

He picked out the best looking one of the three that were there, and led the way up to it.

This he found was called Brown's Gazoo, and was really a very respectable hostelry, from all appearances.

"I guess we can get accommodations here, Red," he said, loud enough for the few men who were in front of the place to hear, as he dismounted.

"I guess so, pard," replied Red. "Gee! But I feel tired, I do."

"Tired? Well, you shouldn't feel so very tired. It is not such a long ride from Deadwood to Weston. And the trail is a pretty smooth one, too. I can't say that I am very tired, though I am glad, of course, that we have got here."

At this moment the hotel hostler approached.

"Want your horses put up for ther night, gents?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the road agent leader. "See that they get the best of care, too, and here's a dollar for you!"

He tossed the man a coin and it was very deftly caught and pocketed.

As the horses were led around to the rear of the building, the two villains entered the hotel.

There were but few guests in the barroom, and a rather pleasant-faced man of fifty was behind the counter, ready to wait on them.

"Good evenin', strangers!" he called out. "What kin I do for you?"

"First of all, give us some of the best whisky you've got," answered Gold Dollar Dick, casting a look at all those in the room. "Come, gentlemen! What are you going to have?"

Such an invitation was always accepted by the men who happened to be there just then.

With smiling faces, they stepped up to the bar and named the drinks they liked the best.

Some called for "fluid lightning," others for "bug juice," and one old fellow declared that he'd take a little rusty nails and vinegar.

The rest called for whisky, and when the glasses were placed in front of them they all got the same bottle to help themselves from.

"Now," said Richard Gold, as he chose to call himself while he was masquerading as an honest man, "we want to engage a good comfortable room to sleep in to-night. Can you fix us out, landlord?"

"I reckon I kin, if any one this side of ther Mississippi kin," was the reply. "My name is Brown, an' that name stands for first class things here in Weston. If you don't believe it, jest ask Young Wild West!"

"Young Wild West, eh?" and Gold looked at him curiously. "I don't know as I ever heard of him. Is he some one of authority in the town?"

"Well, I sorter reckon so, ain't I right, boys?" and Brown turned to the men in the room.

"You bet!" was the response. "Young Wild West is just ther king-pin of authority around here."

"And a whiter young feller was never known," added the landlord.

"Well, we will engage a room for the night and breakfast in the morning," observed the villain. "Your hostler has taken charge of our horses, so I suppose they will be all right. How much is your bill? I guess I had better pay in advance."

Brown told him the amount and it was promptly paid. "You don't want supper, then?" the landlord said, as they started for the back room, where some card playing was in progress.

"No. We struck a camp of cowboys just before sundown, and they gave us all we wanted to eat," answered Red, who thought it was about time he put in a word.

"All right, then. Make yourselves at home, gents. Ther Gazoo is a home for any one, so long as he's got ther money to pay for it, an' it's a mighty good home, too."

The two men now walked into the back room, some of those who had drunk with them following.

"Do you ever play seven-up?" asked one of the latter. "Oh! We understand the game," replied Gold in an off-hand manner.

"Well, what do you say if we have a game to pass ther time till bedtime, then?"

"I don't mind. What do you say, Red?"

"I'm agreeable, Red retorted, seeing that the captain really wanted to take a hand in the game.

"Well, I'll see if I kin git another feller," observed the miner. "Then we kin make it a four-handed game."

He soon found a man willing to play, and then the four of them sat down.

"I s'pose we'd better make it a little interesting," the miner remarked.

"Certain," answered Gold, who was really a professional gambler. "Say five dollars a corner and every man for himself."

"Good! That's jest about ther way we generally play."

They started in to play and had about half finished the game when there came a chorus of shouts from the outside of the hotel.

The next minute a dozen rough and ready cowboys entered and began dancing about and yelling themselves hoarse.

They were the same party Young Wild West and his partners had met as they were leaving town.

The cowboys had been imbibing more whisky since the turndown they received from our hero, and they were just ripe for anything now.

They had made things "hum," as they called it in the other public places, and now they were going to show what they could do in the Gazoo.

"Give us some tanglefoot!" called out the big fellow Wild had knocked from his horse by a blow from his fist. "Give us all some tanglefoot, an' be mighty quick about it, or lead will begin to fly! I'm Howling Henry, an' I hail from Bigfoot Ranch. These are my pards, an' we don't take water from anything."

Brown was used to scenes of the kind, but he did not feel very easy when he saw that there was a round dozen of the reckless fellows.

There was only one thing for him to do just then, and that was to get the whisky on the bar as quickly as he could.

He knew that cowboys generally pay their bills, and even if he did not get all the money for the liquor he put out, he would most likely be ahead, as if he refused they would do considerable damage before they were stopped.

"Take it easy, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "You kin have jest what you want as quick as I kin put it out. Rome wasn't built in a day, you know."

Then he got a hustle on him and pushed out the glasses and bottles.

It was at this juncture that Gold Dollar Dick pushed his way out among the gang.

The big leader of the cowboys seemed to be waiting to get hold of someone, for as quick as a flash he seized the villain and threw him bodily on top of the bar, sending the bottles and glasses flying!

CHAPTER VII.

GOLD DOLLAR DICK MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

"I'm Howling Henry from Bigfoot Ranch!" yelled the big cowboy. "I'm in ther humor fur fun jest now, an' that's ther way I handle ordinary men!"

To emphasize his remark he opened fire on the bottles on the shelf behind the counter and the glass and liquors they contained flew in every direction.

Gold Dollar Dick was on his feet the moment he rolled from the bar. He whipped out a revolver to drop Howling Henry dead in his tracks, but one of the cowboys knocked it from his hand.

But that did not stop the road agent.

He possessed plenty of grit, and he was as active as a cat.

He leaped forward and buckled into the big ruffian, and getting a waist hold, managed to throw him to the floor before anybody knew what he was up to.

"I guess you can't run things all your own way, my friend!" he exclaimed. "Take that! Perhaps it will teach you some manners!"

Howling Henry received a blow in the face that made him see stars.

It was the second time he had been struck there that night, and as his countenance was already badly swollen, it hurt him not a little.

Whack!

Gold Dollar Dick gave it to him again.

Then half a dozen of the cowboys sprang upon him and pulled him off.

By this time the miners had taken a hand in the scuffle, as well as the villain Red.

Strange as it may seem, no more shots were fired.

As if it had been agreed upon, the contestants went at it with the weapons nature had provided them with.

The struggle continued for about five minutes and the cowboys were surely getting the best of it.

Once they got the advantage they began throwing those who opposed them out of the place.

Gold Dollar Dick was one of the first to have this done to him.

Red was not far behind.

And two or three of the miners landed on top of them before they could get up.

Brown remained behind the bar and was taking a philosophical view of it.

"I'd jest give a hundred dollars to see Young Wild West show up about now!" he muttered.

But Young Wild West was at least ten miles away from there, and there was no chance of his showing up.

As soon as there was a little lull in the noise made by the drunken crowd Brown called out:

"Step up, boys! Ther drinks are on me!"

This had the effect of calming them somewhat, but Gold Dollar Dick and Red did not go inside to accept the invitation.

As much as he felt like giving the big cowboy leader a bullet, the villain thought better of it.

He wanted to make himself solid with the men of Weston, and he was trying hard to do it.

In about fifteen minutes order was partly restored.

The cowboys settled up for the damage they had done, and seemed to be content with the way things had turned out.

They had succeeded in running things, and they were satisfied.

They left the Gazoo a little later and went back to one of the other places, some of the crowd that had gathered following them.

Then Gold Dollar Dick and Red showed themselves in the barroom again.

"I could have shot that big rascal who called himself Howling Henry," observed the former, as he stepped up to the counter. "But I never like to shoot unless I have got to. If they had not piled on me as they did I would have given him the worst beating he ever had!"

"I reckon you would," retorted Brown. "You certainly had him jest where you wanted him. I was thinking when ther cowboys threw you all out that if Young Wild West was only here! Wouldn't he have made 'em sick! He could have tamed 'em down in no time."

"This Young Wild West must be a reg'lar wonder," spoke up Red.

"Well, I sorter reckon so!" answered Brown. "He kin jest lick any ten men I ever seen, he kin. An' it don't make no difference whether it's with shooters or knives, or plain, ordinary fists. It's Wild who made this town what it is. Weston is a putty good sort of a place, an' he's ther one what deserves all ther credit."

"I should like to become acquainted with the young man," said Gold. "I can't say that I ever met a man who can do half as much as you say Young Wild West can. I would consider it an honor to be called a friend of his."

"Lots of people think that way."

The two villains talked on with the landlord until they thought it time for them to go to bed.

Then they asked to be conducted to their rooms, and a little later they retired.

Before leaving the cave of the Secret Seven they had told their friends that they were going to remain away all night, so there was nothing to keep them from doing so.

The next morning they got up in time to take breakfast with Brown himself, and they made themselves so affable and pleasant that the hotel keeper took a strong liking to them.

Even the repulsive face of Red did not count.

He was behaving very good, and that was what went with Brown.

After breakfast the two went out and had a look at their horses.

They found them all right, so they walked around to the front of the hotel and took a seat on the stoop.

It was a cool, frosty morning, but they did not mind it in the least.

Both villains wanted to get a glimpse of what was going on in town.

They had not been there more than five minutes when Gold Dollar Dick suddenly gave a start and nodded across the street.

"See the postoffice over there, Red?" he said.

"Yes, Dick," was the reply.

"Well, one of the pretty girls I was speaking of just went in it."

"Is that so?" and Red's face lit up.

"Yes, it is so, sure enough. It was the one who was with Young Wild West who just went in the postoffice. Just take a walk over there and buy a sheet of paper and an envelope, and you will have a good chance to see her."

"Good! I'll go right away."

The ugly looking road agent soon got up from the bench he had been occupying and went over to the other side of the street in the direction of the postoffice.

Gold Dollar Dick watched him with a smile on his face.

"That is Red's weakness," he thought. "A woman sets him off the handle the minute he sees one. And he likes the good looking ones, too. I wonder what would happen if one of those girls were to smile on him? But pshaw! That could not be. No woman could possibly look at Red and smile. It is out of the question, for he is about as repulsive as a hyena."

The leader of the Secret Seven lighted a cigar and fell to musing.

Red stayed in the postoffice fully ten minutes.

But pretty soon he came out, and when he reached the side of his captain he was grinning something after the style of a baboon.

"Ther gal you seen go in is ther one that waited on me. I tell you she is a putty gal, Dick. She was awful pleasant, an' she said good mornin' to me, too. I bought a dollar's worth of paper an' envelopes an' postage stamps, too. You see, I wanted to stay there as long as I could."

"Right, Red. Now, I'll just fold a sheet of paper in one of the envelopes you have got, write some fictitious name and address on it, and go over and mail it. Then I'll get a chance to see the girl too."

"But you saw her yesterday."

"I didn't have very much chance to look at her, though. You see, I was in a rather bad way just then, and I couldn't do much admiring."

"Well, that's so, I s'pose."

The two now went inside and Gold Dollar Dick soon fixed up the envelope.

Then, leaving his companion at the hotel, he went over to the postoffice.

The truth was that he was more than interested in the pretty sweetheart of Young Wild West.

The villain walked into the building, and nodding pleas-

antly at the girl behind the counter, asked for a postage stamp.

Arietta promptly gave it to him, looking at him sharply as she did so.

But it was quite evident that she did not recognize him.

Gold Dollar Dick possessed a great art in disguising himself.

He mailed his letter and then tried to draw the girl into conversation.

But she was too busy to pay much attention to his remarks and cut him rather short.

Arietta was not there for the purpose of chatting with every man that happened in.

There was only one person she really wanted to talk to while engaged at her work, and that was Young Wild West. She was always eager to meet him.

The leader of the Secret Seven did not grow insulting when the girl's actions showed that she did not want to talk to him.

He simply left the postoffice and went back to the hotel.

He was just going to propose to Red that they mount their horses and take a ride around town, when the young man he had held up and robbed the day before came in with an elderly man, who was plainly one of the miners of Weston.

Gold gave his companion a nudge.

"That is the young man I robbed, and who I was forced to give his money back to by Young Wild West," he whispered.

"Ther dickens!" exclaimed Red.

"We may find out something of value. Just take it easy, now, and we'll be very apt to strike luck."

They bought drinks and leaned against the bar apparently engaged in conversation, though really they were listening to the two newcomers.

The two were Al Carey and his uncle, Dan Robinson.

"Well, how are you this morning, Dan?" asked Brown in his friendly way of addressing his customers.

"Fine!" was the miner's reply. "I suppose you heard about my nephew an' niece comin' here yesterday?"

"Seems to me I did hear some of ther boys talkin' about it. Is this your nephew?" and he looked at Al Carey.

"Yes, this is him. A likely lookin' chap, too, ain't he? He's a tenderfoot, he says, but I reckon he'll soon git that out of him. He's goin' to stay here fur good, an' so's his sister. I've give him a half interest in ther Robinson mine, which is about ther biggest in this part of ther Hills. as you know. While it ain't ther richest, it's had more takin' out of it than any of ther others, 'cept ther big mine that belongs to ther Wild West Minin' & Improvement Company. Al, jest shake hands with Mr. Brown."

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Brown," said Al, doing as his uncle said.

"An' I'm mighty glad to meet you, young feller," answered the landlord, giving him a hearty grip. "I hope you'll like it here in Weston. There's some of ther best people what ever drawed breath livin' here."

"I believe that," replied the young man. "I guess I met a couple of them yesterday."

"You mean Young Wild West an' Arietta, I reckon. I heard you was robbed by a road agent, an' that Wild caught him an' made him shell out to you. Well, there ain't none better than Young Wild West an' Arietta, you kin gamble all you're worth on that."

Of course this was interesting talk for Gold Dollar Dick to hear.

It did not make him feel proud of himself, to be sure, but there was a certain satisfaction to be there while he was being talked about, and not being known.

He ordered cigars as there came a lull in the conversation, and then walked over and sat down, Red following his example.

Then Al Carey turned to his uncle again and said:

"Well, suppose we take a walk over to the mine, uncle?"

"It's about half a mile outside of ther town," was the reply. "I didn't dive fur ther claims right in ther middle of ther place, you know, like some did. I made up my mind that I was goin' to make ther town come to me, instead of me comin' to it. I reckon you'll see that sich will be ther case, too, an' that afore another six months has passed."

"Which direction is it, did you say?"

"Come right here to the door an' I'll show you exactly where it is."

Al followed the miner to the door, and then Gold and Red moved so they could see too.

They were deeply interested, for it struck them that they might realize something from the mine if they worked their cards right.

"You see that big oak over there with ther top broke off?" said Dan Robinson, pointing to the southeast.

"Oh, yes! I can plainly see that, Uncle Dan," answered Al.

"Well, that's jest where my mine is—or our mine, I might as well say, fur ther papers are bein' fixed up down at ther bank now. That tree is not more'n forty feet from ther entrance to ther shaft."

"How many men have you working there, uncle?"

"Only two now, an' they're simply doin' duty as watchmen. I've got some new machinery on ther way here, an' I ain't goin' to do anything till it gits here, which will be in a few days now. You see, we struck a big cave about thirty feet under ther ground, which runs ther whole length of ther claim, an' which is full of galleries an' passages. It's putty much of quartz rock, an' that makes it hard work to git ther ore out. But it pays when it is got out, Al. It pays wonderfully!"

They passed a few more remarks with Brown and then left the hotel.

Then the two members of the band called the Secret Seven arose and signified their intention of taking a ride around the town.

They ordered their horses brought out, and mounting, rode off.

They did not go in the direction of the big oak with the broken top, but took another course.

But their idea was to fetch up there as quickly as possible, for all that.

And they did get there before Al Carey and his uncle did, too.

They got back in a big clump of trees and undergrowth and waited until the two came up.

The two watchmen were at the entrance to the mine, and when they came up they were lowered down, so the tenderfoot could have a look at the interior of a gold mine.

"There is no use in staying here," said Gold Dollar Dick. "Let's move over in this direction. There's a hollow back there, which looks as though it runs right up to this claim. There might be something to be found there."

Red acted as though he hardly believed anything would be found there that would interest them, but said nothing.

Leaving the horses in a good hiding place, the captain led the way to the hollow.

It was a sort of gully, and when they reached it they found it was choked with bushes and undergrowth.

But when Gold Dollar Dick looked upward he made up his mind that the gully extended right upon the claim of Dan Robinson.

"This is what I call a tough place," said Red. "I don't believe any one has been here in a year."

"No," was the retort. "That makes me all the more anxious to get through. Come on!"

He began working his way through the bushes, and in five minutes he pushed through a perfect net-work of vines and found himself in a deep pit that was almost entirely covered by fallen trees and vines.

There was a break in the center of it overhead, and through this a flood of light came.

"My!" exclaimed Red. "Looks like a regular trap, don't it, Dick?"

The captain nodded in the affirmative.

"It does," he remarked. "Just see! This place we came through is not more than six feet wide. The vegetation has hidden it completely."

"There's been a cave-in here some time or other, you kin bet! By ginger! Look there, Dick!"

Red pointed excitedly to the mouth of the black looking hole, and as his companion turned his gaze that way he beheld a rather gruesome sight.

A bunch of human bones and some skulls were there!

The face of Red paled slightly, but a smile came over the face of Gold Dollar Dick.

"This is what I call pretty good!" he exclaimed. "I'll bet a hundred that there is a passage leading from that hole into the Robinson mine! It can't be otherwise, Red."

"Yes, but them skeletons! They don't look very nice, Dick."

"They don't, eh? What's the matter with you? Isn't a skull one of the emblems of our band?"

"Yes, but—"

"Never mind, now. So long as it is not your own skull you are looking at, what's the difference?"

Red shrugged his shoulders.

"All right, Dick," he said. "I guess you know what you're talking about."

"Well, I rather think I do. Come on!"

He picked his way down into the natural pit, which was not more than twenty feet square, if it was that.

Then stepping over the bones, he peered into the black opening.

He had scarcely done so when the faint sound of voices came to his ears.

"I told you so!" he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper. "This passage leads into the cave of rock that the miner was telling his nephew about. We're in luck, Red!"

Red shook his head doubtingly.

He could not understand where the luck came in.

"It is a good thing I have one of our signs with us," Gold Dollar Dick went on. "We will put one of them right here!"

There was the dead limb of a tree sticking from the ground so that it looked exactly like a post. There had no doubt been a cave-in, as Red had said, and this was all that showed of a tree that had been buried.

The captain of the Secret Seven found a hat that was in a good state of preservation inside the hole, and he quickly pinned it on the top of the post. Then he carefully tacked one of the signs of the band beneath it so that it faced the opening.

"That will do until to-night," he said with a chuckle. "Now, we'll go back to our quarters."

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK MAKES HIS ESCAPE

Jack Robedee was hustled along over the rocky ground by the three members of the road agent band, his wooden leg stumping so it made lots of noise.

"Say! Jest make that wooden hoof of yourn hit ther ground easier, so it can't be heard a mile," said one of the villains. "If you don't you'll git a piece of cold steel between your ribs!"

He was quite sure that one of his partners, at least, could not be very far from the spot.

His hands were bound to his sides in such a manner that his fingers on the right hand could easily pull the wire that connected with the trigger of the revolver hidden in the wooden leg.

He determined to fire a shot, knowing that if either Wild, Charlie or Jim heard it they would promptly hasten to the spot to see what was the trouble.

He stumped along with one man on either side of him, and the remaining one of the three leading the way.

It was the latter who had cautioned him not to make so much noise.

Robedee concluded to make him feel the effect of the shot he was going to fire, if he could.

He waited his chance and pretty soon it came.

The villains reached the top of a short ascent, and then halted for a moment with their prisoner.

Then Jack suddenly lifted his wooden leg and gave a sharp pull on the hidden wire with his fingers.

Crack!

As the report rang out the man ahead of him let out a yell of pain and began leaping about like a jumping-jack!

The bullet had grazed the side of his neck, and it must have stung him as though a red-hot iron had been drawn across his skin.

But the queerest part of it all was that the two who were holding him failed to understand just where the shot had come from.

They let go of Jack in a twinkling and bounded away as though their lives depended upon it.

The wounded man started after them, leaving Robedee rolling on the ground, since when the others let go of him he lost his balance.

Bound and gagged as he was, he could do nothing but lie there and wait for something to turn up.

And something did turn up pretty quickly.

The receding footsteps of the three villains had not died

out before he heard someone approaching from an opposite direction.

Jack felt that his deliverance was at hand.

It was hardly probable that it was any one belonging to the road agent gang coming.

The next minute he heard the footsteps come to a halt.

Then he began kicking and struggling so he would make a noise that would be heard.

And he was successful in doing it, too, for suddenly the form of a man bent over him.

"Um-um!" was all Jack could say.

"Hh!" exclaimed a voice in a whisper, which he instantly recognized as belonging to Cheyenne Charlie. "I wonder who this is?"

Then he got down closer and Robedee managed to thump his wooden leg on the ground.

That settled the identification.

"Thunder! It's Jack!" whispered the scout.

Then he quickly tore the gag from his mouth.

"Hurry up! They might be right back!" exclaimed Jack.

Charlie did not say anything just then.

He cut the captive loose in a jiffy and helped him to his feet.

Then Jack led him back into the bushes.

"What happened to you, Jack?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"Three of ther gang we was lookin' fur got me, that's all, was the reply.

"How did they do it?"

The information was soon whispered to him.

"Well," observed the scout. "That jest beats me! So that wonderful leg of yours surprised 'em so they lit out, did they? Well, I reckon there ain't anything for me to do but to go back to where ther horses are with you. So they put up another sign, did they? Them fellers must mean business, for fair!"

The two men now started back, after listening for the space of half a minute and not hearing anything.

They soon reached the trail and found the horses all right.

Cheyenne Charlie took a look at the sign that had been tacked upon the tree since he left, and then he gave a nod.

"They think they're mighty smart," he observed. "But I reckon Wild won't be long in findin' a way to beat 'em. This here is what I calls defyin' things in general."

"It seems as though they're challengin' us," said Robedee. "They call that ther Sign of ther Secret Seven."

"Well, if there's only seven of 'em, they won't last that many days, an' you kin bet on that!"

"There'd been one less of 'em now if I'd had time to git a bead on 'em. I meant to let that feller have it right in ther back of ther head, but ther bullet only scraped his neck, I guess. He let out a yell an' danced like a crazy man fur about a second."

"I heard him. I didn't know what was up, but I wasn't far off, an' I got there in quick time."

"I wonder if Wild or Jim heard ther shot?"

"I don't know. Ther chances are that they did, though."

They waited for about fifteen minutes and then Jim Dart suddenly appeared.

"What luck?" asked Charlie.

"No luck," was the answer. "I worked around until the first thing I knew I brought up on the trail. I thought I would come here and see if anything had turned up."

"Did you hear me shoot?" asked Jack.

"No. What did you shoot at?"

"I shot at one of ther Secret Seven."

"One of the Secret Seven?"

"Yes. That's the name of ther gang we've started out to hunt down."

"It is, eh? How about it, anyhow? How did you come to get a shot at one of them?"

Jack told him all about it.

"You had a close call, Jack," said he. "Suppose they had taken a notion to kill you right here, and then put one of the signs on your breast?"

"Well, I'm mighty glad they didn't take ther notion. One of 'em sorter wanted to do it, though."

"Well, it is a good thing that the other two were not of the same mind."

"Well, I've always had plenty of good luck," observed Jack, "except once."

"And that was when you lost your leg."

"That's it. That was ther worst thing what ever happened to me. I can't git around like you fellers any more, an' that hurts me!"

"Well, never mind. When you do get around you generally render a good account of yourself."

A few minutes later Young Wild West showed up.

He too had been baffled in finding the retreat of the road agents.

When he heard all that had taken place he was surprised, as well as a little pleased.

"So they call themselves the Secret Seven, do they? Well, I am glad we know that much, anyhow. We know who we are fighting against."

"What are you goin' to do now?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"Well, we can't do anything more in the darkness. The only way we can find out anything is to run across some of the scoundrels accidentally. If we only had all stayed here! It ran in my head that this was the proper place to come to look for them. We could have followed those three fellows and found out just where they had their headquarters. Jack couldn't do it, of course, since his wooden leg was too much of a hindrance."

"I thought about it, though," said Jack. "I couldn't fol-
ler 'em very well, but I was inquisitive enough to take a look at that sign, an' that's how they come to git me."

"Well, we may as well ride back to Weston. Then in the morning we will decide on some plan of action. Those fellows are around here somewhere, and you can bet all you're worth we will find them!"

"You're right on that," nodded Cheyenne Charlie.

It being decided upon that they were to go home, our friends mounted their horses and rode on back over the trail.

It was late enough for them to retire when they got there, so they did.

The next morning Young Wild West and Jim Dart got up pretty early.

They had just finished breakfast when Cheyenne Charlie came over.

"Ther cowboys we met last night had a high old time in town when they got here," he said. "They cleaned out things in general, so I hear. Brown got his bottles an' glasses smashed up putty well, an' they chucked everybody out what didn't like their fun. Old man Murdock was jest tellin' me about it."

"The fellows who were there must have been pretty weak-kneed, then," answered Jim. "Or maybe there were very few there at the time."

"Old man Murdock said there was a strange feller there what threw ther leader of ther gang down an' was givin' him a good maulin', when ther rest of 'em interfered an' chucked him out of doors."

"We'll take a ride over there before we start out huntin' for the Secret Seven," observed Wild. "We've got all day ahead of us, and it won't hurt to learn what was going on last night while we were away. Me might get a clue, you know."

When they got their horses and were ready to start over to the Gazoo a call came for Wild from the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company, so they all went in.

The business took our hero over half an hour, and it was during that time that Al Carey and his uncle passed there on their way to the gold mine.

Jim saw them go past, however, and as he knew their plans pretty well, he simply remarked that they were probably getting ready for business.

The three soon rode over toward the hotel, and when about half-way there they met the cowboys.

The gang had started in afresh on the spree they were having, and when they saw Young Wild West coming they recognized him and let out a yell.

CHAPTER IX.

HOWLING HARRY LEARNS A WHOLE LOT.

"Hello!" exclaimed Young Wild West when he saw how the cowboys were acting. "I guess those fellows must have forgotten what happened to them last night. Well, we have more time this morning, so if they are looking for satisfaction, I guess they can have it."

"I reckon they kin," retorted Cheyenne Charlie, smiling grimly.

"Whoop! Whoop!" shouted the reckless riders, as they rode up and brought their bronchos to a halt. "Hello, you weary pilgrims. We're mighty glad to see you!"

It was Howling Harry who said this, and our friends could understand the words above the yells of the rest.

"What's the trouble, my friends?" asked Wild, looking

at the man's battered countenance. "You look as though you had been run through a rolling mill. What's the matter with you, anyhow?"

"I know who you are now, young feller," was the reply. "You're Young Wild West. We found that out at ther first whisky mill we struck when we come in ther blamed old town last night. I want to tell yer that we've been runnin' things our own way since we've been here, an' that we're goin' to keep right on doin' it."

"Oh! You are? Well, so long as you can run things your own way without interfering with anyone else, go ahead and do it. But don't interfere with me, please."

"We won't, hey? Well, jest mind your eye, now, 'cause we're goin' to git square with yer, d'ye hear that? You made a big fool out of me last night, an' I'm goin' to git square fur it."

"Well, if that is the case, just start right in!"

As our hero said this he jerked one of his six-shooters from the holster and leveled it at the big rascal's heart.

He had scarcely made this move when Charlie and Jim had drawn their revolvers.

"Start right in, if you want to get square!" thundered Wild, looking the leader of the crowd right in the eye. "Don't go to mincing matters—start right in!"

The bullying cowboy quailed before the gaze of the dashing young Prince of the Saddle.

"I—I—" he stammered.

"Never mind about that. Go ahead. If you don't I am going to give you a thrashing. Do you understand what I say—a thrashing!"

A gentle touch on the rein caused the sorrel stallion to edge up close to the big cowboy.

Wild was now within reaching distance of him and the muzzle of his revolver was still covering his heart.

The rest of the men were as much taken back as was their leader.

They looked at our three friends in open-mouthed amazement.

"Here! I guess you have changed your mind," said Wild suddenly. "But I haven't changed mine. Get down off that horse, or I will shoot the buttons off your shirt!"

Howling Henry did not move.

Crack!

True to his word, our hero began shooting the buttons from his shirt.

He was at the side of the big fellow, and that gave him a good chance to do it.

The top button that held the blue shirt about his neck flew off!

"Hold on!" cried the cowboy. "I guess you're too much for me, Young Wild West. I don't want any trouble with yer."

"Oh! Have you changed your mind really, then?"

"Yes. I ain't no hog. I knows when I've got enough. You ain't ther one as to take fun, I see."

"Oh! I like fun, and so do my partners. But when it comes to somebody going to whip us, then it is a different matter. We never allow any one to whip us."

"I reckon you don't—not by ther way yer act," was the meek rejoinder.

"I tell you what you fellows do," said Wild.

"What?"

"Ride over to the Gazoo Hotel and I'll treat you to cigars,"

Howling Harry hesitated.

"I say ride over there!" repeated Wild in a meaning tone of voice.

Cheyenne Charlie was grinning with delight now.

He liked to see a bully taken down, though he was hardly the one to do it himself.

He was too impulsive and was apt to shoot at the least provocation.

The dozen cowboys, who had been in such a reckless mood but a few minutes before, turned their horses and headed for the hotel as meek as so many lambs.

Young Wild West and his partners rode along behind them, just as though they were merely bringing up the tailend of a procession.

The people in the stores, who had witnessed what had taken place, came out and gave a cheer.

"Hooray fur Young Wild West!" cried one. "He's ther boy what kin run ther town. Hooray fur Young Wild West an' his pardners! They can't be beat ther world over!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

The cheering came from both sides of the street.

And so the procession rode up to the Gazoo Hotel, and as the cowboys dismounted a crowd was on the stoop to learn what it all meant.

"Step right in, boys!" said Wild. "Hey, there, Brown! Just give each of these gentlemen a cigar. I'll pay the bill!"

"All right!" answered Brown, a grin on his face. "I reckon somethin' has happened."

"You reckon jest right," observed Cheyenne Charlie. "But it's all right now. There ain't no danger of anything dangerous takin' place."

Then he laughed in his hearty fashion and the waiting miners joined in.

The cowboys smiled in a sickly way and marched up to the bar and received their cigars.

Not one of them asked for a drink.

This seemed rather surprising, but they had been asked to have cigars, and it was more than likely that they thought Young Wild West would be offended if they refused to smoke.

"Brown," said our hero, "these men seem to be pretty good sort of fellows, if you only know how to handled them. I don't believe there is one among them who would harm a kitten, if it came right to the point."

Again that sickly smile went around.

"You're ther best I ever met!" declared Howling Henry. "I ain't ashamed 'cause I've been downed by you, Young Wild West. But I do want to say that I don't believe there is a man in ther crowd what kin handle me. I mean jest fur ther fun of it—not in madness."

"I suppose you are of the opinion that I couldn't put you out of this barroom?" Wild said questioningly.

The big cowboy looked at him as though he could hardly believe that he had heard aright.

"What's that, Mr. West?" he asked.

"I said I supposed you were of the opinion that I couldn't put you out of this barroom. You are a very strong man, and you should be able to pick me up and throw me clean across the room."

"Well, I reckon I am able to do that," replied Howling Henry. "And as fur you puttin' me out of here, without killin' me first, I reckon you're only foolin'. There ain't no two men in here what could do that."

"Well, I'll tackle you alone, just for the fun of it, and I don't want you to get mad, either."

"Do you mean that, Young Wild West?"

"Oh! I certainly do."

"Well, I'll let you try, jest to make some amusement fur ther boys, then. I'll guarantee that I won't git mad—no matter what you do to me. But if you put me out without someone to help you, I'll be ther most s'prised man what ever straddled a broncho!"

"Some one open the door, please," said Wild, unbuckling his belt and handing it to Charlie.

"Wait till I git my belt off too," spoke up the big fellow, whose face now wore a confident smile. "I don't want you to think that I might use a shooter or sticker if you do throw me out on my head."

"All right. It will give you a better chance, too. And I want you to just understand that you'll need to be clear of everything when you get to hustling it with me. Now, I am not going to hurt you, so say when you're ready!"

The confident way in which our hero spoke fairly staggered those who did not know what he was capable of doing.

Howling Henry acted as though it was all a farce—in fact, he did not really think that the boy was going to undertake such a thing.

"Are you ready?" called out Wild, as the man stood looking at him.

"Yes, I'm ready, Young Wild West."

"Then out you go!"

Wild darted at him like a shot, but before he got within reach he jumped aside and then sprang behind him.

Just how it happened the cowboys hardly knew, but the next thing they knew Howling Henry was going out on top of Young Wild West's head, feet foremost!

Our hero had very neatly caught him in the back with his head, and then seizing his ankles, had lifted him bodily.

It required considerable strength to raise such a heavy man, but Wild possessed the strength, as well as the skill.

He carried the cowboy out of the barroom as though he had been a quarter of beef.

And Howling Henry was unable to help himself, since Wild's head pressed so hard against his back that it took all the life from him for the time being.

Bump!

Down came Howling Henry, landing on his feet upon the ground.

But he could not retain his equilibrium, so fell forward and caught himself on his hands.

As he struck the ground, a wild cheer went up from the spectators.

The cowboys yelled as loud as any of the rest.

It was the greatest thing they had ever seen done, and they were not slow to show how they appreciated it.

Gasping and sputtering—for his breath had been pretty well jarred out of him—Howling Henry remained on his hands and knees for a second or two.

Then he got up and slowly walked into the hotel.

"It's all right," he said. "I didn't think it could be done, but it kin. You're all goin' to be refreshed at ther expense of Howlin' Henry, who ain't goin' to howl half as much as he used to. Young Wild West has learned me a lesson, boys. We'll all drink to ther lesson!"

Our three friends remained there for a few minutes and then rode off, bent upon finding the hiding place of the Secret Seven.

CHAPTER X.

A MEETING ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE.

Al Carey was shown around through the mine by his uncle and he expressed himself as being well satisfied with it.

It being the first time he was ever in a gold mine, he was much interested, of course.

But things were not in working order in the Robinson mine just then, though, as has been stated, the old miner had taken lots of dust and nuggets from it.

Mining is a great deal like fishing.

You can dig away the earth, and work hard, but the gold is not always found, and you can sit on a bank and fish all day long without hauling in a fish.

"When we git ther machinery here I reckon we'll git out ther stuff all right," said Robinson. "Ther pay dirt lies back in them passages, but ther rock has got to be drilled an' blowed away before it kin be got at good. I'll guarantee that you'll be a rich man afore you're two years older, Al! I know what I'm talking about when I say that, too."

"Good, Uncle Dan! I am going to devote myself to hard work, and if I don't succeed it won't be because I haven't tried."

"That's ther way to talk, my boy. I like your way. You're a tenderfoot, but you're made of ther right kind of stuff."

They were down in the mine a little over half an hour, and when they were hauled up to the surface again they were just in time to see Young Wild West and his two partners riding by.

"Hello, Wild!" called out Dan Robinson. "Where are you goin'?"

"To look for the road agents," was the reply.

"Ah! I hope you catch 'em, my boy."

"Well, we can't allow a band like that around here. They have either got to make themselves scarce or be taken, dead or alive!"

Wild, Charlie and Jim had just left the Gazoo Hotel, but our hero was in no particular hurry, so he stopped to talk with the tenderfoot and his uncle.

A few minutes later they rode on.

Jack Robedee did not go with them this time.

Wild thought it best to leave him home, as he was of little use to scout around on foot.

They made straight for the tree the sign had been nailed to.

When they reached it they found the piece of cardboard with its curious legend still there.

There was the skull and the seven knives showing out boldly—almost defiantly, it seemed.

"Well," said our hero, as he looked at the sign, "I took the other one that was here, so I guess I had better take this one, too. Here goes!"

He dismounted quickly and tore the placard from the tree.

Doubling it up, he placed it in the pocket of his hunting coat. "Now, Charlie," he went on, "just lead the way to the spot where you found Jack lying on the ground bound and gagged."

"Come on!" said the scout. "I kin soon do that, I reckon."

Wild swung himself on the back of Spitfire and then they rode up the ascent to the bushes at the top of it.

The scout had little or no difficulty in finding the place, and as soon they got there all three dismounted.

What had been an impossibility the night before was now comparatively easy for them to do.

A trail through the bushes could be seen quite plainly.

"This must have been ther way them three measly coyotes run last night after Jack let a shot go from his wooden leg," said Charlie. "Jest come on kinder slow like an' we won't miss ther trail."

They did ride on slowly, but in less than two minutes they emerged from the bushes and came upon a stretch of rocky ground that was so hard that it was impossible to discover anything that looked like a footprint upon it.

"Here's where we lose time," observed Jim Dart, looking around in disgust. "Those fellows know how to throw us off the scent all right."

A shadow crossed the face of our hero.

He could readily see that it was going to be a hard task to find where the men had left the rocky ground.

"There is only one way to do it," he said, "and that is to ride around the edge of it and look for footprints in the soft ground."

They started to do this.

But the hard ground extended a long way—a couple of miles or more—and they had quite a task ahead of them.

But Young Wild West never grew discouraged.

Where he could not find out by his keen observation, he trusted to his good luck to find out for him.

They rode along the fringe of bushes for nearly two miles, but failed to come across anything that looked like a trail.

They had been going in the direction of Weston, and when the end of the open spot was reached Wild called a halt.

He was just going to dismount when the noise of approaching horses suddenly came to their ears.

Some one was coming from the direction of Weston.

The horses—for there were more than one—were on a trot and fast nearing them.

"Come!" he exclaimed. "We will go and meet them, whoever they are."

Two seconds later two horsemen came in view.

They were strangers, and that made Wild interested in them. The fact was that they were no less personages than Gold Dollar Dick and Red returning from Weston.

The two villains had not hurried after placing the grewsome sign at the mouth of the passage in the pit near the mine.

On the contrary, they had gone back to one of the stores to purchase some tobacco.

They had missed seeing Young Wild West take the cowboys in hand, too, and started from the town about fifteen minutes later than our friends.

Gold Dollar Dick was not much surprised when he saw Young Wild West riding toward him.

He knew that the dashing young deadshot was looking for them, and to find him here was nothing more than might be expected.

"Good morning, strangers!" he called out in a different tone of voice than he had spoken in at the last meeting with Wild. "We have got off the trail somehow. Can you tell us the shortest way to get to Deadwood from here?"

"Yes," answered our hero, bringing his horse around so he could face the speaker without turning his head. "You can cut right across here and you will strike the Deadwood trail in less than five minutes. Where are you from, if I may ask?"

"Weston," was the quick reply. "We put up at the Gazoo Hotel over night."

There was something about the man that reminded him of someone he had seen, but he could not just bring it to his mind who he was.

However, he was very greatly impressed with the man, and when he sized him up he made up his mind that he was about as tough looking a specimen of human kind as he had seen in a long time.

"Where are you fellows from?" queried the captain of the Secret Seven, after a short pause.

"Oh, we all belong at Weston."

"Weston, eh? Out hunting, I suppose?"

"Yes, hunting for a band of road agents," answered Wild.

It struck him that the two were suspicious characters, and he wanted to see if the words would have any effect on them.

And he was gratified to see that they did, for Red shrugged his shoulders and showed signs of uneasiness, while Gold Dollar Dick could not keep back a start.

"Road agents, eh?" he said, recovering himself with great

quickness. "That is so. I heard about the stagecoach being held up. Have you got any idea where the scoundrels are?"

"I think they are around here somewhere."

"Well, suppose you should run across them, what would you do?"

"Either kill or capture them."

"But wouldn't that be a bold undertaking for the three of you?" and the leader of the villainous band seemed to be really surprised.

"Oh! I don't know," retorted Young Wild West in his easy way. "There are only three of us, to be sure, but there are only seven of the road agents."

"Well, even if that is the case, they outnumber you by more than two to one."

"Oh! That makes no difference. You show them to us and we will get them quick enough."

"You must be remarkable fellows."

There was just the least tinge of a sneer in the man's voice as he said this; and our hero and his partners were not slow to notice it.

"I don't know whether I am or not. But I know that I have been able to clean out all the gangs of outlaws that have attempted to do business here. This new gang is called the Secret Seven, I believe, but I guarantee that it will be a public seven before many hours."

Both Dick and Red winced at this remark and looked surprised.

They could not understand how it was Young Wild West knew they called themselves the Secret Seven.

"Here is their sign," resumed Wild, taking the folded cardboard from his pocket and handing it to him. "Rather a grim-looking sign, isn't it?"

"Well, well!" said the leader of the gang the sign represented, affecting astonishment. "I should say it was! Those fellows must be a desperate lot, indeed. I wouldn't think of tackling such a gang as that unless I had a score of armed men behind me."

"Oh, I don't think they are so very dangerous," answered Wild with a laugh. "I had the leader of them yesterday, and I caught him very easy, too. I let him go before I was aware that he was one of the Secret Seven, however. If I had known it, you can just bet that he would have been strung up before this. We don't allow any bands of road agents, or bands of outlaws and renegades to flourish in this part of the country. It is against the principle of the town, you know."

There was a short silence and then Gold Dollar Dick suddenly changed his manner.

"Who are you?" he asked abruptly, while a contemptuous smile played about his mouth.

"Well, the only name I ever had, as far as I know, is Young Wild West," replied our hero, who was not satisfied that the man was one of the "no good" sort.

"Young Wild West, eh? Well, you are either the most remarkable fellow I ever met, or about the biggest bag of wind that was ever collected from the breaths of a bustering lot of prevaricators!"

Wild laughed softly.

"So that is your opinion of me, is it?" he asked, keeping as cool and unruffled as though he was simply listening to a schoolboy recite.

"Well, I suppose it is my opinion, otherwise I would not have said it."

"Well, let me tell you my opinion of you."

"I don't object."

"I think you are one of the Secret Seven!"

If a pistol had been discharged alongside his ear Gold Dollar Dick could not have been more startled.

"Yes, an' if that red-headed galoot ain't some kind of rascal I'll jest miss my guess!" spoke up Cheyenne Charlie.

"Certainly," replied Wild. "What one is, so is the other, you can bet."

"I'm as honest an' law abidin' as you fellows are," said Red, who was the first to find the use of his tongue.

"That is about ther same thing as callin' me a liar, I reckon," observed the scout. "Now, you measly coyote, I want you to take that back! I want you to say that you ain't as honest as we are! I want you to say it quick, too. If you don't I'll jest yank a handful of hair out of that mop of yours."

Neither of our friends had offered to draw a revolver, but that made no difference.

Gold Dollar Dick knew the dashing young fellow he had

to deal with, and he was not going to take any chances of losing his life.

But the thought lurked in his breast that he could best the boy in a square fight, for all that.

"If you are satisfied to let the matter drop for the present, I am," he said. "I know you are mistaken in your opinion of me, and it may be that I, too, am mistaken in what I said."

"Well, my friend, there is only one of us who is mistaken. It is you who are mistaken. I don't believe I am."

"Well, I will meet you at Weston to-night, then. If you can prove it by that time that what you say is true, all right. But if you cannot, I shall expect an apology from you."

With that the villain urged his horse in the direction that had been pointed out to him as the way to get to the trail, and rode off.

Red followed, but not until Cheyenne Charlie had pulled a few hairs from his head.

"That's all right," cried Red. "You've got ther best of me jest now. I ain't goin' to fight with yer."

Our three friends remained still in the saddle until the two men were out of sight.

Then Wild dropped to the ground.

"I am going to follow them on foot!" he said. "I don't believe they are going very far. You fellows come on with the horses on a walk."

CHAPTER XI.

WILD IS DOOMED TO A HORRIBLE DEATH.

Young Wild West hastened along in the wake of the two horsemen.

He had not gone over two hundred yards when he caught the sounds made by the hoofs of their steeds.

The animals were on a jog trot.

But the boy's practiced ear told him that they were not heading for the trail.

They had turned and were going toward the south.

The moment he realized this he turned that way, taking a short cut to head them off.

Suddenly he came upon a deer-path that ran in the very direction he wanted to go.

Wild was as light-footed as a fawn, and he put on a spurt that carried him swiftly along the path making scarcely a particle of noise.

In about a minute he struck a place where another deer path ran into this one.

Then he came to a sudden halt.

It was not because he saw the path, but because he saw hoof-prints on it.

They were there plentifully, too, and when he saw them he wondered how it was that he and his partners had not seen them when they came over the stony ground to the bushes.

Our hero was satisfied that he was on the right track at last, and he meant to make the best of it.

Just as he was going to continue on his way he heard horses coming along the path.

He knew it could not be Charlie and Jim, so that meant the two he started to follow were coming.

He had headed them off by running so fast.

Wild did not go any further, but quietly stepped back into the bushes and crouched down out of sight.

He had scarcely done so when Gold Dollar Dick and Red came into sight.

The trees and undergrowth were so high just there that they could not be seen by anyone who was a few feet away from the path.

They brought their horses to a walk just as they came opposite to the spot where our hero was concealed.

"We've got to be careful, Red," he heard Gold Dollar Dick say. "Young Wild West must have recognized me, I guess. He will be after us hot now."

"I don't think he knowed you was ther man he had yisterday," Red replied. "If he had known it he would never have let us go."

"You are right, come to think of it. He merely suspected that we belonged to the Secret Seven. I made a mistake in talking the way I did. But never mind! It is all right anyhow, for Young Wild West's doom is sealed! Just as sure as the sunset will come to-night Young Wild West will die. He has sealed his own doom by making the resolve to run us down. He must die!"

Wild smiled softly when he heard this.

He could have captured the pair of them right then and there if he had desired, but he had something else in view. He wanted to find where the Secret Seven were located. With this knowledge he could easily accomplish the rest later on.

As soon as they had got past and rounded a short turn in the road he started after them.

He could hardly hear the horses walking now, they were going so slow over the soft ground.

He kept right ahead, and two minutes later he saw an opening in advance of him.

The two horsemen had disappeared, too, and he wondered where they had gone.

But it was not time to wonder. He must find out.

Dropping to his hands and knees, he crept forward.

In doing this he snapped a dry twig, the noise of which must have certainly been heard a good distance.

Revolver in hand, the boy waited, for he expected to be set upon at any moment.

But there was no sound to indicate that anything of the kind was going to happen.

That is where Wild got fooled.

The cave of the road agents was but a few feet distant, and just as Gold Dollar Dick dismounted in the mouth of it he heard the twig crack.

He suspected that they had been followed right away.

Though they had done their best to throw Young Wild West and his partners off the track, it was impossible that they had failed.

The leader of the Secret Seven realized this.

"Come back, Red!" he whispered. "Some one has followed us here!"

The other five men heard this and they got their weapons ready.

Gold Dollar Dick and Red crawled softly in the direction of the place where the twig had cracked.

All was as silent as the grave.

It was just at this juncture that Wild started to move ahead again.

The two villains caught sight of him.

And our hero did not see them.

He was running squarely into a trap, but was not aware of it.

Suddenly he was pounced upon by the two villains, and taken completely by surprise, he was unable to make an outcry before they had covered his mouth.

The two had no sooner borne him to the ground than the rest of the gang sprang to assist them.

The result was that Wild was caught and held secure till he was disarmed and bound.

A gag was then thrust into his mouth and he was carried to the cave.

"Now," said Gold Dollar Dick, "boys, just three of you go off in different directions for about fifty yards and lay for the approach of this fellow's two friends. Shoot them dead in their tracks the minute they show up. Red and I were followed here by them, and as they have sworn to run down the Secret Seven, it is our duty to make short work of them. We've got the leader of them, anyhow, and he has got to die, under any circumstances!"

"Goin' to make way with him right away, Dick?" asked Sam Skink.

"No. I want a little time to think. I want to put him away in a novel and original manner. Go on, the three of you! Remember what I said about the two partners of Young Wild West! They are not far away from here this minute!"

The three he had selected to do the watching went off as he had directed.

Wild, bound and gagged and utterly helpless, lay on the ground in the back of the cave in anything but a pleasant frame of mind.

"Once more in my life I have been caught napping," he thought. "Oh, what a fool I was for not moving in a different direction after that twig snapped! I should have known that I must have been close to the quarters of the villains. It is a streak of bad luck that has come just as I thought I had them dead to rights. Well, never mind. It is not over yet. I will get out of this all right, I rather guess."

But it did not seem as though he was—very soon, anyhow, for an hour passed and there were no signs of Charlie or Jim.

The three men came in and reported that they had caught a glimpse of two horsemen riding along and leading another horse, but that they had been such a distance off that they did not think it advisable to shoot at them.

"They was heading along ther path fur ther trail," said one. "I reckon they've got throwed off ther scent. They was follerin' ther hoof marks made by you an' Red when you set out fur Weston last night."

"Good!" exclaimed Gold Dollar Dick. "They are off the scent for a while, anyhow. But it will only be a question of a short time before they come back. Then they will find this place, in spite of anything. They will most likely bring more men with them, too, so we had better move our quarters."

"Move our quarters, Dick," gasped Red. "Where will we move to?"

"Closer to Weston, of course," was the reply. "That will throw them off the scent more yet. We will locate right near the mine we discovered this morning."

"You mean ther pit that is outside ther Robinson Mine?"

"Yes."

"That would be a good place to hide."

"Of course it would. We could get quite a little gold dust out of that place, too, before they begin working it. We will make for the pit, and we will go right away before them fellers find out they have been following ther wrong trail."

"All right. Jest as you say. I reckon you know what's best fur us."

"We will take Young Wild West there with us and make an example of him. We'll kill him and then leave the sign of the Secret Seven on his breast for his friends to find some day when they explore the passages."

This proposition delighted the men.

As the conversation had been carried on in very low tones at the mouth of the cave, Wild did not hear it.

Consequently when he heard the villains making preparations to shift their quarters a few minutes later, he had not the least idea where they were going to.

But when two of them appeared before him with a heavy sack, and without a word, pulled it over his head, he began to feel quite uneasy.

He thought that they were going to do away with him.

He soon changed his mind on this, however, for when they carried him out of the cave and placed him on the back of a horse and tied him fast he knew they were going to take him with them.

But as he could not see or talk it was a puzzle to him.

The villains took a roundabout way to reach the mine at the outskirts of the town.

Young Wild West had no idea where he was.

Gold Dollar Dick made his men keep still on that subject.

They wanted to worry him all they possibly could.

"When are you goin' to do ther blowin' up, Dick?" asked Red, when they had deposited Wild on the ground not far from the shaft of the mine.

"Right away," was the reply. "We struck it right by coming here just at this time. There is no one around but the two watchmen, and they are above. Just go ahead and get the powder, some of you."

Two of them hastened back through the passage.

It was several hundred feet in length and turned many times, but Gold Dollar Dick had marked the way by dropping whisps of dry grass every few yards.

And as they had a lantern to work with, there was no trouble for them to go in and out.

In a few minutes a two-pound can of powder was brought to the villainous captain.

The spot he had selected for the horrible thing to take place was where a quantity of loose boards were piled.

An empty nail keg was found and the powder placed in it and a fuse attached.

Our hero struggled with all his strength when two of the men dragged him to the spot.

The villains laughed in a heartless manner.

"Are you ready, Dick?" asked Red.

"Yes, get ready to run, boys! The fuse will only burn five minutes."

At this juncture Wild struggled once more to free himself.

Then the men placed boards against him so he could not possibly roll from the keg.

"You are deep down under the ground, Young Wild West," said Gold Dollar Dick as a last reminder. "When you are blown to pieces we will be safely outside. Good-by, you meddlesome young fool, who has brought on your own death."

Red struck a match and lighted the fuse.

Then they left the boy to his fate, running as fast as they could for the outlet.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

It was shortly after noon on the same day we have been writing of that Maud Carey asked her brother to take her down in the Robinson mine and let her see what it looked like.

They had an early dinner and as Al was very much pleased at what he had seen in the mine, he promptly agreed to comply with his sister's request.

It so happened that at the very time the fuse was touched that would ignite the powder and blow Young Wild West into atoms they started down the shaft.

The brother and sister had no sooner landed on the level of the bottom of the mine when they both smelled smoke.

It came from a gallery right ahead of them, and their first impulse was to run and see what was the matter.

In dropping the match that he had lighted the fuse with Red must have let it fall into some inflammable substance, for there was a blaze there, and in the light of that blaze Al Carey and his sister saw a bound form lying over a keg.

But the young man saw more than that.

His eye caught the spluttering fuse.

The spark was less than two inches from the keg, but acting on a sudden impulse, he rushed forward and tore it away.

Then he grabbed the body and pulled it from the keg.

It turned over and the face of Young Wild West was revealed to him.

"Heavens!" cried the tenderfoot. "Maud come here and help me. It is Young Wild West. Some one has been trying to kill him!"

The girl rushed forward and saw that it was really the handsome young fellow who had saved her from the road agent.

"Cut him loose, brother!" she cried, as she tore the gag from the boy's mouth.

"Hurry!" cried Wild as soon as he could find the use of his tongue. "There is powder in the keg."

Both Carey and his sister seemed to have forgotten the fact that the fuse must have led to some sort of an explosive, for the fire was steadily eating its way toward the keg.

Al Carey made a move as though he was going to try and extinguish the flames.

Wild turned and saw him.

"Come, Carey!" he shouted.

The tenderfoot turned, but just as he got ten feet from the keg it exploded.

Both Young Wild West and Maud Carey were knocked off their feet by the concussion.

A pall of inky blackness settled upon them and a rumbling sound told our hero that the dirt was caving in.

Luckily just then a burst of flame went up.

The barrel of oil, which was open at the head, had ignited.

By the fierce glare that shot up Young Wild West was able to see Al Carey lying unconscious on the ground.

He darted forward and seized him just as the girl got upon her feet.

"Is he dead?" screamed Maud hysterically.

"Calm yourself," retorted Wild, who was now thoroughly himself. "He is only unconscious."

He did not know that this was a fact, but it was best to say it just then, as he well knew.

A dense cloud of smoke now forced itself upon them and they were forced to flee.

But the way to the shaft was cut off.

"Where are we, anyway?" Wild asked, as he bore the unconscious form of Carey through a narrow gallery.

"Why, in the Robinson mine—don't you know?" faltered the girl.

"No! I did not know. But I can't tell you why just now. A terrible danger threatens us!"

"I will be as brave as I can, Mr. West. Oh! I hope Al is not badly hurt."

"He will be all right presently. But hurry! We must get away from this. Why, not only the smoke, but the flames seem to be following us!"

This was indeed a fact.

On went Young Wild West, sometimes dragging the unconscious young man and sometimes carrying him bodily.

Another hundred feet was covered and then Wild suddenly caught sight of a faint light ahead.

Maud saw it, too, and a glad cry escaped her lips.

They hurried on as fast as our hero could go and soon they emerged from the narrow gallery into a broader place and saw a flood of light ahead of them.

Young Wild West came to an abrupt halt and allowed Carey to drop gently to the ground.

It was now a double danger that threatened him, for just back of the post that contained the grewsome sign stood seven masked men with leveled revolvers.

The villains had started to enter the cave shortly after the explosion had taken place, but the smoke had driven them back.

Then they had heard the voices of Young Wild West, and footsteps coming toward the outlet.

When they saw it was Young Wild West, and that there was a girl with him, a cry of joy came from the lips of Gold Dollar Dick.

"Ha! Young Wild West!" he exclaimed. "I don't know how you escaped from being blown to pieces, nor do I care now. You have your choice of dying. Go back and suffocate, or come out and be riddled with bullets!"

As these words rang out Maud Carey fainted dead away.

Wild looked at the seven villains in silence for the space of a second.

He was just going to back into the smoke-filled passage when a startling thing occurred.

There was a crashing noise overhead and then a man and a horse dropped into the pit.

This so disconcerted the masked scoundrels that they involuntarily lowered their weapons.

Young Wild West was quick enough to take advantage of this.

Out came both his revolvers in a twinkling.

Crack, crack, crack! Crack, crack, crack!

Six times he fired—so quickly, in fact, that he took no aim.

Down went five of the villains, either dead or badly wounded.

Crack! Crack!

He was more deliberate about the last two shots and the two who had been in the act of rushing upon him fell to rise no more.

One of the wounded was Gold Dollar Dick.

He turned over and was just going to fire at Wild when the horseman who had fallen through from above sprang upon him.

It was Howling Henry, the cowboy!

"No, yer don't, you galoot!" he cried. "I reckon it is a lucky thing that my horse let out an' tumbled me into this pit. The poor critter killed hisself, I guess, but I'm alive, all right!"

Wild sprang to his assistance and soon had the road agent leader bound.

Just then loud cries came from above.

"It's my crowd," said Howling Henry. "They was follerin' me up. My bridle rein got broke an' ther blamed old nag was running away. But it's all right, Young Wild West. You're ther whitest young feller ever pulled a trigger. My! But you laid out six men quicker than you kin talk about it. Hooray!"

Five minutes later the pit was swarming with the cowboys.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, who had struck the trail of the Secret Seven, came up at that moment and then Wild's triumph was complete.

At sunset that night Gold Dollar Dick was hanged to the lone pine tree in front of the jail.

That was the last of the Secret Seven.

There is little more to add to this story.

The Robinson mine was not injured much by the explosion and fire and in due time Al Carey went at work with his uncle, and we might as well say right here that he made heaps of money from it.

His sister's lover came on a few weeks later and she was happily married to him.

But she will never forget as long as she lives how Young Wild West faced a double danger.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE RENEGADE RUSTLERS; or, SAVED BY THE SORREL STALLION."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

One of the most beautiful of the early lighthouses, and the first tower in a sea-swept position, was Cordouan light on the coast of France at the entrance to the River Gironde, says the Indianapolis News. It was built in 1611, and, although it has been remodelled, some of the original structure is still there, more than 200 feet high.

Conservation of binding twine used in the postal service is urged upon postmasters by the Post-Office Department because of the abnormal increase in price. A department statement suggests that a considerable saving may be effected if twine on incoming mail packages is saved and used again. The 55,000 post-offices in the United States require each year 680,000 miles of jute twine, weighing 2,000,000 pounds, which it is estimated would encircle the globe twenty-seven times.

The fact that a cow can live seven days without water has been proved on the farm of James Fogarty, south of Anderson, Ind., where a cow became a prisoner under a stack of straw and was found weak, but still alive. In the night before the cow disappeared and Mr. Fogarty notified Sheriff Black that it had been stolen. This morning a second cow was found missing. A search under a straw stack that had toppled over disclosed both animals underneath. The cow that got under the stack first was penned in on all sides and compelled to stand for seven full days and subsist on straw without a drop of water. It will live.

A peculiar incident in connection with a collision between two automobiles is reported from the Lyons district of Hamlin County, S. D. The two autos collided with such force that the occupants of both cars, with the exception of a twelve-year-old boy, were thrown from the cars to the ground. The boy at the time of the collision was asleep in the back seat of the smaller of the two cars. After the collision those thrown from the car looked around for him, finding him in the front seat of the car. The boy was yet asleep and on being awakened could not explain how he had made the flying leap from the back to the front seat.

Capt. C. G. Rawling, a member of the British expedition that explored Dutch New Guinea, describes what may be the greatest unbroken precipice in the world. It runs, he says, for a distance of eighty miles from Mount Carstenz westward to the Charles Louis Mountains. Its greatest sheer height is at Mount Leonard Darwin. The explorers were never in a position to measure with the theodolite a sheer height of this immense precipice exceeding 6,500

feet, but from many views obtained of it while he was climbing Captain Rawling has no hesitation in stating that the greatest perpendicular height is not less than 10,000 feet or almost exactly two miles.

Art has been added to the scope of the activities of the officials of the Canal Zone, as indicated by this announcement in the Panama Canal Record: "The bronze statue of Christopher Columbus and the Indian maiden which has stood in front of the de Lesseps Building at Cristobal Point, and overlooking the Atlantic entrance to the French canal prior to the erection of Docks 9 and 10 on the adjacent waterfront, has been moved to the grounds of the Washington Hotel and is to be erected in the yard facing toward the Atlantic. The statue was presented by the Empress Eugenie of France to the United States of Columbia, and was accepted by the Congress of Columbia through a decree dated June 29, 1866."

Five million copies of Congressman Tavenor's speeches against preparedness were franked by him at a cost to the treasury of the \$490,000 that should have been paid for postage. Three million copies of the Tavenor speeches were sent in packages to various persons throughout the United States, who were asked to address the franked envelopes which accompanied the speeches and mail them to their friends. This was the grossest abuse of the franking privilege. Not content with this, Tavenor sent letters urging other individuals to send for more speeches that might be franked out. Tavenor, his secretary and his clerk, all of whose salaries were paid by the government, devoted a great part of their time to this franking campaign.

It is believed that Sayaji, the Rajah of Baroda, is the possessor of wealth equal, if not superior to that of John D. Rockefeller. He was educated in an English university, and his people are well governed. Much of his vast riches is in the form of precious stones. His wife owns the most famous diamond necklace in the world. It is worth \$12,000,000, and is made up of 200 stones, each the size of a hazelnut. She also has a collarette of 500 perfect diamonds, none less than twenty karats. In the treasure chamber is a carpet four square yards in surface, made up entirely of ropes of diamonds, pearls and rubies. It required \$4,000,000 worth of gems and three years of labor. The long corridors of the palace are lined with marble and onyx of incalculable value. The palace is steam-heated and electric elevators are placed at frequent intervals. Bronzes, paintings, statuary, all imported and worth many millions of dollars, are scattered throughout the royal dwelling.

MR. WALL OF WALL STREET

OR

The Man Who Came from the Klondike

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XXI (Continued).

"Oh, come right in, captain," replied Fred, and the master of the Sea Eagle entered with his bottle, finding the massage treatment going on full head.

Fred thanked him for his attention, and in a moment Captain Lang withdrew.

Dick rubbed away industriously for some time, Fred occasionally letting out a dismal groan.

"Now it's safe to talk," breathed the detective at last. "I just heard him go away, though I suppose you didn't."

"No; I can't say I did," replied Fred. "Out with whatever you have to say, quick, for heaven's sake. I'm getting enough of this."

"It all came about through my detective work," breathed Dick. "I had no idea it was you who had engaged this boat until I saw you come aboard. But now I know more. There is no use stopping at these landings, although, for appearance sake, I suppose you will have to. Jack Silver has gone where Mr. Wall went, and where these men are going. The fellows who have him in tow are using them to locate gold on your Klondiker's best claim."

"Is it possible!" whispered Fred. "Upon my word, you are a wonderful man!"

"Wonderful, or ordinary, boy, it is a good job for you that I came to the Klondike. It may be the intention of these scoundrels to do you up, for all I know; but I will keep you informed."

The massage came to an end soon after that, and a few minutes later Fred returned on deck and informed Nellie of what he had heard.

Of course, she was much disturbed.

"What do you propose to do, Fred?" she asked.

"That's what I am thinking about," replied Fred. "Dick Ditchett doesn't know where this place is, and that's the trouble, but he thinks we shall reach it some time early to-morrow morning."

"If Jack is really there, then I am glad we are going."

"But think. Did Jack never tell you where his best claim is?"

"Never. He never tells me anything about his business."

"Then we will have to wait for a steer from the detective," replied Fred. "I'll keep a sharp lookout. Don't you fear?"

But in spite of his confident talk, Fred was afraid.

There were six men aboard the Sea Eagle, without counting the captain or engineer, and eight against three is heavy odds.

At one o'clock a good dinner was served by Mrs. Buffett, and shortly before three the landing at Badger Creek was made.

As it was not possible to run the steamer up to the little wharf, two of the sailors pulled Fred and Nellie ashore in a rowboat.

They were quiet and respectful, but Fred took no stock in them. Now that his attention had been called to it, he could see that they were desperate men.

There were only a few huts at Badger Creek, and, as was to be expected, no information of Jack Silver was gained.

Fred and Nellie then returned to the steamer.

The looks of the miners at Badger Creek were not inviting, and Fred did not feel like taking chances among them.

The next landing was Queen's Creek, and this Captain Lang told Fred would be made about midnight.

During the afternoon, while the Sea Eagle was ploughing her way between the dismal mountains which here skirt the Klondike on both sides, Dick Ditchett managed to slip Fred another note, which read as follows:

"You two are to be left near Queen's Creek in a boat. You will not be harmed. Have just learned that Lang is not the captain's true name, and that he stole the master's certificate which he holds. You have been fooled all around. It would be madness to put up a fight. Looks as if you would have to go in the boat. I will try and meet you later."

This note was neither addressed nor signed.

Fred would have kept it from Nellie if he could have done so, but she saw it dropped on the deck, and insisted upon reading it.

"This is just dreadful!" she exclaimed. "Can nothing be done?"

"I don't see what we can do," replied Fred. "It seems to me that we had just better trust to luck and take chances of turning up friends at Queen's Creek, but I advise you to hide what money you have. I shall have a little loose change in my pockets and hide the rest."

It was a discouraging outlook. Fred played cards with Nellie in the cabin during the evening, and they retired about ten o'clock.

Sleep, of course, was impossible with Fred. He did not even undress, but lay in the bunk with a blanket pulled over him, sharply listening to every sound.

At last the alarm came, but in a way all unexpected.

Suddenly Fred was startled by loud shouts on deck, and instantly there followed several shots and the sound of heavy bodies falling.

"Oh, Fred! Fred!" screamed Nellie from the opposite stateroom. "What shall we do?"

Fred sprang up and threw open the door, drawing his revolver as he did so.

"Quiet down!" he called in a whisper. "I'm going to see what this means!"

The calling out still continued, but there were no further shots.

Fred crept up the cabin stairs and quietly opened the door.

He had no sooner done so than he was pounced upon by two masked men.

"Here he is! This is the passenger!" cried one. "Hold him, Bill!"

Just then a man, also masked, came hurrying up.

"We've captured the engineer!" he exclaimed. "What do we do with him? He's an ugly one! Shall I feed him lead pills?"

"Not on your life! He must be held and made to work the boat," was the reply. "Is the captain dead?"

"Yes, and four of the men jumped overboard, and I can't find the other. We've got the boat all right. But who have you here?"

"It's the passenger, I suppose. Some blamed tenderfoot millionaire from the States."

"What's to be done with him?"

"Skin him first. There may be others, though. Speak up, young fellow. Who have you got with you on this yacht?"

They were evidently strangers. Fred saw that the three men who gathered about him were dressed differently from any of the crew.

"This boat has been attacked by some band of river toughs," he thought, for he could see the bodies of the crew lying about the deck.

It was a strange turn of affairs.

Fred's heart sank as he thought of Dick Ditchett. Was he, too, among the dead?

But worst of all was the thought of Nellie.

What would be her fate if she fell into the power of these men?

"There is only my sister with me, gentlemen," he said, speaking as steadily as he could. "I don't know who you are or what you want, but I hope you will respect the lady and not harm her, whatever you may do with me."

CHAPTER XXII.

DICK DITCHETT TURNS A TRICK WITH DYNAMITE.

"What's your name?" demanded the masked man, who still clutched Fred's arm, paying no attention to his remark about Nellie.

"Fred Morgan."

"Where are you from?"

"I am from New York."

"Where are you bound?"

"We were just running up the river on a pleasure trip. We expected to go as far as French Creek. Perhaps further."

"You do, hey? Well, mebbe you'll get there and mebbe you won't. It all depends upon how much cash you cough up. How much have you got aboard?"

"How much money?"

"Yes, yes! Come, boy, it's no use sparring for wind. You're in the soup, and there is only one way out of it—cough up."

And, indeed, the prospect was by no means brilliant.

Fred had been sparring for wind, and while doing so was taking in everything.

The Sea Eagle's engine had stopped now, and the steamer was drifting with the current.

Made fast alongside was a small tug of antiquated pattern, evidently one of the many of her kind which were brought up the Yukon from San Francisco at the time of the first rush to the Klondike.

Fred wondered how in the world Captain Lang could have allowed these men to steal a march on him, as they evidently had done.

"Oh, I'll give up," he said, "if you'll let go of me so I can get at my pockets."

"I'll go below and fetch up the gal," growled one of the others.

But to this the spokesman objected.

"Hold on till we get through with this job, can't you?" he growled. "Let's take one thing at a time. What a deuce of a hurry you are in."

"Hey! Hey! Hey!" a voice suddenly shouted. "Men, leave this steamer or prepare for your doom!"

"Who in thunder spoke?" cried the leader, starting back.

He could see no one but his own men and those of the crew who lay dead on the deck, nor could Fred. Yet the latter recognized the voice as Dick Ditchett's, wherever the detective was, and that to his immense relief.

"This beats the band!" growled the leader. "Say, Bill, look about. See what's doing. Come, you, now, cough up and we'll investigate later. Skidoo! Get a move on you! Quick!"

Fred saw no help for it, and handed over a hundred dollars.

(To be continued.)

INTERESTING ARTICLES

UNEARTHS OLD INDIAN TOWN.

Prof. W. B. Nickerson of Epworth, Iowa, who has been making extensive excavations on the site of an old Indian village near Cambria, Minn., and in some Indian mounds in the vicinity of Mankato, Minn., has just completed his work for the Minnesota Historical Society.

Prof. Nickerson found that the Indian village was situated on the bluff overlooking the Minnesota River Valley some 500 years ago and has unearthed much pottery, weapons, household tools and bones.

He is of the opinion that the Mandan Indians may have inhabited the locality, which might account for many evidences of some degree of civilization, as these Indians were lighter in color than others and are believed to have some white blood in their veins.

WOMAN BARBER POPULAR.

No loud wails because of the barbers' strike are heard in Hackensack, N. J., except the feeble complaints of boss barbers less enterprising than Louis Santruff.

When Louis opened his shop the other morning a young woman, stately, brunette and handsome, stood beside the second chair. She invited one of the waiting customers to take the chair, lathered and shaved him, hot-toweled and massaged him, talcumed and scented him, combed and brushed him, doing it all with fingers as gentle as they were deft.

News of Louis's woman barber spread like wildfire. It was the first barber of the other sex that Hackensack had ever seen; soon Louis's store was crowded with waiting customers, while his sidewalk was crowded with the curious, looking through the window.

SAVES CHILD FROM BEAR.

A little three-year-old boy running toward a big brown bear caused quick action on the part of William Peopmeller, a Chumstick rancher, the other day.

Mr. Peopmeller was loading a car of wood at the siding, and his little nephew was playing about the car when Mr. Peopmeller was attracted by his two dogs barking in the underbrush about 100 feet distant.

He observed the bear coming out of the canyon and also saw the child going to meet it. The child had not seen the animal, but was going over to where the dogs were. Mr. Peopmeller reached the child and, with it under his arm, ran a short distance to the house and got his rifle. He got a few shots at the animal before it again entered the brush, but failed to hit it.

GIRLS TO LURE MEN TO ARMY.

The United States Army authorities at San Francisco, Cal., have advertised for women to aid in securing recruits for the army. The advertisement, inserted by Lieut.-Col. John H. Gardner, retired, who is in charge of the recruiting station there, called for "twelve girls for the United States Army."

The advertisement specified that they must be "attractive, intelligent and industrious"; held out the inducement that there was a chance to "make money and do your country a service," and concluded with the warning that "no triflers need apply."

Col. Gardner's plan is to secure a store on a prominent street and install therein an exhibit which will demonstrate the life of a soldier from camp cooking to infantry drill. The woman recruiters will work out of that station, and will be paid \$1 for every recruit they secure.

LIQUID-AIR BOMBS TOO DANGEROUS.

After a good deal of experimentation the French army has given up its attempts to use liquid air as a high explosive in warfare, because of its extreme susceptibility to detonate from shock.

Tremendously successful experiments were made with this volatile agent at first; they were unsuccessful. For instance, bombs for bombarding aeroplanes were made with liquid air as the explosives which some judged to be one hundred times more powerful than bombs of a similar size employing picric acid or any of its prototypes. But it was soon learned that the sudden descent or even rapid swooping of an aeroplane carrying liquid air bombs might set off the dangerous cargo. It happened on one occasion; an aviator dipped suddenly and nothing was ever found of him or the machine.

They then dropped bombs from captive balloons. The effect of the explosion was marvelous. Instead of reducing the target to matchwood and wreckage, the detonation actually wiped out every vestige of the place where the huge, cumbersome target had been. It was estimated that the concussion of the explosion would have killed any living creature within 150 yards.

Shell charged with liquid air cannot, of course, be fired from any projectile; the shock of firing would detonate the explosive and wreck the gun. Attempts have been made to use liquid-air grenades and liquid-air bombs in trench mortars, which are fired by a spring, much as a catapult's missile is projected. But the extreme "touchiness" of the explosive has outweighed its wonderful detonating qualities. The Germans also have failed to utilize air thus far.

DRIVEN OUT WEST

OR

THE BOY TENDERFOOT OF LUCKY STRIKE

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XIII (Continued).

In due time they reached the city, and, having established Harry's ownership to the Jennie McCartin mine, they secured a proper deed and set out for Lucky Strike.

"I now have a clear title to the claim," said Harry, as he and Dan rode away the next day. "It should not be very hard now to sell my interest to James Leland."

"Yes, yes," assented the old scout, lighting his pipe and puffing away. "Sell ther mine ter him, pard, and let him hev ther fun of drivin' Bill Boggs an' his gang of claim jumpers off ther property. Thet will save us a whole lot of trouble."

They rode hard and finally reached Lucky Strike by nightfall, Dan offering to pay all Harry's expenses until he got money of his own.

All the placer miners had come into camp after their day's toil, and many of them recognized the boy tenderfoot with friendly nods, for they now had a high regard for his cool courage.

Stabling their horses at Monday's Hotel, they strolled into the crowded barroom, and Harry asked the landlord:

"Say, Solomon Monday, where is Mr. Leland?"

"Gone," was the brief reply.

"Left here?"

"Yes. Ter-day."

"And his daughter?"

"Went with him."

"Do you know where?"

"They didn't tell me, young feller."

"And wasn't any message left for me?"

"Not a word. The banker paid his bill, and he and his daughter mounted their mustangs and rode to the westward."

"That would bring them into the foothills."

"I s'pose so."

"Did any one come or send for them?"

"Not as I knows."

"How strange! They expected us back here."

"Waal," drawled the landlord, "that's all I know about it."

Seeing that he could not get an explanation of the mystery from the man, Harry strolled away to a table at which Dan was seated, with a glass of whisky before him, and sat down.

"Leland has lit out," announced the boy.

"Thunder! You don't say?"

"I guess he has abandoned his plan to buy my claim, and now I'm no better off than I was before."

"Too bad yer hain't got money enough ter put in machinery and ter hire a gang of miners ter work yer claim," said Dan.

"Well, that's where I'm handicapped. I would make more out of it that way, no doubt. If Leland don't return within a reasonable length of time I'll have to hunt around for another purchaser, I suppose."

"Yer won't have no trouble ter find one if yer makes yer price low enough," said Dan. "I'm mighty puzzled about ther queer way ther banker an' his darter went off. D'yer reckon they've met with foul play?"

"It wouldn't surprise me a bit if they had," answered Harry. "If Bill Boggs and his gang feel sure that they can't sell the mine to him I believe they will try to abduct him and hold him for ransom."

"Wuss than thet," added Dan gloomily. "When I seen Boggs castin' sheep's-eyes at Miss Leland, I thinks ter myself as ther blasted villain wuz in love with her. He knows blamed well her father would not consent ter him marryin' her, even if she agreed to it. An' as he's an unscrupulous duck, he wouldn't hesitate a minute ter steal ther gal, an' try ter force her ter marry him."

Startled at this suggestion, Harry cast a quick glance at the old scout, and felt that his idea might be the correct one.

"If such is the case," said he, after a few moments' reflection, "I won't rest easy until I've rescued the girl from that blackguard."

At this moment they heard a terrific clattering in the dark hall behind them, and Hop Sing, the Chinese cook of the hotel rushed up to them.

There was a joyful look upon his yellow face and in his slant eyes as he paused before Harry, bowing and scraping, and cried:

"Mister Hally, me so glad you comee back, allee samee. You no savvy dhis lettee? Me finddee he in Boss Leland loom to-day."

He held out a slip of paper to the boy, and Harry asked him:

"What about Mr. Leland?"

"Yipee-yi! Me leabee job here, an' make topside jobee Boss Leland, twenty dollee each week so be. Now he vamoose alle sam'."

"Dan," laughed Harry, "what does this Chink mean, anyway?"

"Why, ther heathen sez he tossed up his job here to take one as Mr. Leland's cook or servant at a better price, and now his new boss has gone an' give him ther shake," replied the scout, with a grin.

"And this letter?"

"Me findee he! Me findee he!" said Hop Sing eagerly. "Him ine Boss Leland loom, Hally. Yo' savvy?"

"Found it in Leland's room, eh?"

"Yep, Hally."

"But why did you fetch it to me?"

"Yo' fliend ob Boss Leland so be, an' me sink yo' leadee lettee, an' tellee me where him boss is," replied the cook.

"Oh, I see. Here, let's read your note, and find out what it says."

And Harry spread it out, and perused the following lines aloud:

"Mr. Leland: Please come right up the creek to Claim No. 7, and bring your daughter. I have discovered a dark plot against your life, and wish to warn you without being seen. This is a matter of vital importance. Your failure to comply may lead to your instant death. Pay your hotel bill, and do not say a word to anybody about your meeting with me. It must be kept a secret or trouble will ensue. Come right after my messenger delivers this note to you.
HARRY NEVADA."

The tenderfoot glared at the letter a moment in silence, and frowned.

"This is a rank forgery!" he cried at length. "Dan, our enemies are at work. They have lured Mr. Leland and his daughter into a trap."

"Thet's as sure as yer born," assented the scout angrily.

"See here, Hip Sing," exclaimed Harry, turning to the Chinaman. "Can you guide my partner and me to Claim No. 7 to-night?"

"Boss, me sarvy de place."

"Will you go?"

"Yep."

"Then get ready at once!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHINAMAN'S HORSE-PISTOL.

As the Chinaman had an old horse, he was soon mounted, and rode away with Harry and Dan, determined to find his new boss, and secure his job, since he had resigned from Solomon Monday's employ.

In half an hour they reached claim No. 7.

It proved to be a placer on the bank of a creek running down from the mountains, and Harry saw a log hut quite close to the shore.

A couple of men were standing knee-deep in the water, digging up sand from the bed of the creek, and dumping it into sieves on rockers which they swayed to and fro to wash away the dirt from the gold nuggets.

They glanced up at the tenderfoot and his companions, and the boy at once saw that they were two of Bill Boggs' gang.

Harry had a good memory for faces, and for that reason recognized the pair at a glance, although he was careful not to show it.

"Good morning," said he, reining in, and nodding to the men. "I'd to know if you saw anything of an old gentleman and a young girl around here yesterday?"

"Thar hain't been no strangers aroun' hyar' in a week," was the gruff response of one of the men, darting a warning glance at his companion.

"Are you quite sure of that?" pursued the boy pointedly.

"Say, young feller," growled the man in the water, "are yer hintin' as I'm a liar? If that's what yer mean, say so."

"I never hint," coolly answered the tenderfoot. "I generally say right out what I think. We know very well that the old man and the girl were here. If you say they were not, you're a liar."

"By gosh——" began the gold miner, and he started to draw one of the big revolvers he carried in his belt.

"Stop!" exclaimed the boy, interrupting him, and as quick as a flash he flung up his rifle and covered the fellow.

The other man was going to pull his own gun to aid his friend when Dan suddenly roared:

"Hands up thar, yer varmint!"

The click of his rifle spring caused the man to glance around, and when he saw Dan drawing a bead on him he weakened, and flung up his hands.

For a moment there was a deep silence, only broken by a chuckle from Hop Sing, and then Harry said to the miners, in his cool but forceful way:

"Come up here from the water!"

They were inclined to be obstinate until they saw the dangerous glitter in his eye. It seemed to subdue them at once, for they meekly obeyed.

"Wha' d'yer want?" snarled one of them in ugly tones.

"I'll tell you, sir," replied Harry quietly. "We know who you are. We know you belong to Boggs' gang. We also know that Boggs sent a forged note, supposed to come from me, asking Mr. Leland and his daughter to come here. I've got the note. Now, if you value your life, you will instantly tell me what you have done with the old gentleman and his daughter. I'll give you one minute to answer."

"I don't know nuthin' about 'em!" growled the man.

(To be continued.)

TIMELY TOPICS

TURTLE HANGING ON CARP.

Wallace Amick of Scipio, Ind., captured a nine-pound carp and a good-sized turtle in a peculiar manner recently. When rowing in Sand Creek near there his attention was attracted by the flopping of a fish apparently grounded in shallow water. The fish was easily captured, being almost exhausted, and on drawing it from the water Amick found a turtle hanging to the fish. It had seized the fish near the base of the tail and retained its hold till it was killed.

SISTERS EARN \$2,400.

Four Westmoreland County, Pa., young women, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Smith, of near Ruffsdales, have established a new agricultural record in the yield and profits to be derived from a two-acre plot of cabbage.

The Misses Smith, the eldest of whom is eighteen, now have a bank account of \$900 with accounts due from Pittsburgh commission men amounting to \$900, and a fourth of their cabbages yet remains to be cut and marketed. Buyers estimate the value of the entire field at about \$2,400.

Early this spring Smith turned the two-acre plot over to his daughters, telling them to make any use of it they desired. The girls, after closely scanning the market reports for weeks, decided to grow cabbages. They set about 18,000 plants.

When the time arrived to cut cabbage, the scarcity of the vegetable and sky-high sauerkraut quotations made the realization of \$2,400 for the two-acre plot merely a matter of patience and good salesmanship.

DEER ATTACKS POSTMAN.

Clark Smith, the oldest rural route agent attached to the Huntington, Pa., post-office, met with a spirited attack from a big buck deer while on his return trip a few evenings ago within three miles of that place.

A herd of six does, led by a large buck, had been feeding in a mountain meadow and were about to emerge into the open highway just as Smith was driving leisurely past.

His horse, a calico-colored broncho, seemed to have aroused the ire of the buck, which leaped a fence and attacked the broncho by rearing up and endeavoring to strike it with its forefeet. Mr. Smith used his whip vigorously on the deer. The broncho took fright and finally drew itself and driver to a safer locality.

A herd of ten deer, including one elk, has been seen by a farmer at the further end of Smith's route.

DOGS BURIED SEVEN DAYS.

Entombed fifteen feet in the earth for 168 hours, and without food or water the entire seven days, two dogs belonging to two boys of Rosedale, Kan., dug themselves out and have returned to their home after being given up for dead.

The boys, with their dogs, were chasing rabbits about a bluff when they ran a "bunny" into a deep hole in the ground. The dogs followed the rabbit in and there was a cave-in. The boys came up and dug to rescue the dogs, but when they quit at nightfall they were still many feet away.

The next day, imagining the dogs had perished from suffocation, they were given up for dead. Six days later the boys were astonished to see one of the dogs appear at home, weak from lack of nourishment and scarcely able to walk. His nails literally were worn off from constant digging.

The boys then went to the cave-in and dug in the hope that they could save the other dog. After digging about two feet in the earth they heard moans and soon the other dog was rescued, after he had dug himself that close to liberty.

Neither of the dogs would eat at first and would only drink milk. Then they began to seek food and ate it ravenously.

SAVED ALIVE FROM THE JAWS OF A BEAR.

Ammon Harer, a farmer living near Liberty, Pa., saved the life of his brother Ellery (who lay prostrate under a wounded bear, which was tearing and chewing the man's arm) by striking the animal on the head with an ax.

The exciting battle occurred on the Harer farm recently. As Ellery Harer opened the kitchen door at his farm home to investigate a peculiar noise, he was confronted by a large black bear only a few feet from the doorstep. The farmer jumped back into the house and slammed the door almost in the face of the bear.

Armed with a gun containing one shell he partly opened the door and fired. The shot wounded the bear, which turned and disappeared down a gully below the house.

Harer, carrying his gun with five shells—all the ammunition in the house—and his brother, armed with an ax, followed. They soon overtook the bear. Harer pumped the remainder of the ammunition into bruin's body and the enraged animal turned on him.

Raising itself the animal struck Harer with a front paw, tearing the flesh off his arm. As the bear struck both fell, the man under the bear. The man was held a prisoner as the bear tore and bit at his bleeding arm, until his brother rushed to his rescue, and with a blow with the ax on the bear's head killed it.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1916.

TERMS TO SUBSCRIBERS

Single Copies05 Cents
One Copy Three Months65 Cents
One Copy Six Months	1.25
One Copy One Year	2.50

POSTAGE FREE

HOW TO SEND MONEY—At our risk send P. O. Money Order, Check or Registered Letter; remittances in any other way are at your risk. We accept Postage Stamps the same as cash. When sending silver wrap the Coin in a separate piece of paper to avoid cutting the envelope. Write your name and address plainly. Address letters to

Harry E. Wolff, Pres. } **FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher**
N. Hastings Wolff, Treas. }
Charles E. Nylander, Sec. } 168 West 23d St., N. Y.

Good Current News Articles

Mr. H. C. Moffit of Whiteville, N. C., is showing his friends a potato of the Dixie yam variety that measures twenty-nine inches in length. It was grown on Mr. Moffit's farm near town.

Canceled checks representing \$7,000, said to have been paid to alleged members of the syndicate of handbook operators by a widow, were placed before Federal Judge Landis, at Chicago, Ill., in the course of his investigation into the betting ring case. A woman is said to have informed the court officials that she lost the sum indicated in the checks and \$23,000 more betting on horse races, and that she is now working for \$2 a day.

Among the most curious of trees is the gigantic zaobab, which flourishes in Central Africa, the trunk of which sometimes attains a diameter of forty feet, according to the Los Angeles Times. This trunk serves as a natural cistern, retaining rainwater in large quantities in a cavity formed at the top. The Arabs artificially hollow out the trunks of large baobabs and fill them with water during the prevalence of rain as a provision against the dry season. These cisterns are in many cases twenty feet in height and eight or ten feet in diameter.

The Rev. Benjamin Brunning, of Boone, Iowa, ninety-six years old, is the oldest minister in the United States in active charge of a pulpit for the Unitarian Church. The Rev. Mr. Brunning declares that he expects to be more than one hundred years old. Pressed for an answer as to his longevity recipe he said that to reach the longest age one should take things easy, not worry over world series, and to leave the girls, Kelly pool and cigarettes alone. The Rev. Mr. Brunning was accompanied at the conference by his son, N. B. Brunning, of Boone, seventy-one years old, whom his father declared he still was able to take into the woodshed "and tan his hide."

The Junior Hop Club of New Albany, Ind., has voted to offer a reward of \$100 for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who drugged punch served at the club's dance at Glenwood Park, causing acute suffering for a dozen or more young men and girls. The physicians believe that Croton oil, ipecac or lobelia was the drug that some miscreant or would-be joker dropped into the punch after it had been delivered at the park pavilion. It is certain that the symptoms of the sufferers, such as burning at the mouth and in the throat, extreme nausea and acute pains in the stomach, indicated the use of a powerful irritant, not necessarily fatal, unless swallowed in unusually large quantities.

Grins and Chuckles

Mistress—But, bless me, why are you leaving us, Mary? I'm sure I do all the work. The General Servant—Yes, ma'am, but I don't like the way you do it.

Mamma—I suppose you find Robbie a rather remarkable boy, don't you? Teacher—Yes. Mamma—In what special study? Teacher—In all. He never knows a lesson in any of them.

"My wife was arrested yesterday." "You surprise me. What was the trouble?" "She got off a trolley car the right way, and a policeman thought she was a man in disguise."

Laundryman—I regret to tell you, sir, that one of your shirts is lost. Customer—But, here, I have just paid you twelve cents for doing it up. Laundryman—Quite right, sir; we laundered it before we lost it.

"Which is the starboard side of a ship?" "Why, don't you know? That's the side where the star boarder has his room." "Then why do they call the other side the port side?" "Because that's where the porter sleeps."

"Heavens? Who's the girl that's trying to sing?" "That is my daughter." "Oh—um—if that fool of an accompanist would consent to stop thumping the piano as if it were some wild savage thing he wanted to kill, we might—ah, that's better. What a sweet, beautiful voice she has!" "Yes. That is her brother at the piano."

A lady at the tables at Monte Carlo could not make up her mind on which number to place her money. Seeing her hesitation, her neighbor said to her: "Do as I do, madam. Put your money on the number which corresponds to your age." The lady thereupon planted her louis on No. 22, and the winning number was 36. "Ah, madam," said her gallant neighbor, "if you had only followed my advice."

A CURIOUS CASE

By Col. Ralph Fenton

"Bad failure, wasn't it?"

"Yes, indeed; quarter of a million gone up higher than a kite."

"Get caught?"

"No."

"You're lucky."

"I should say so; I had some of Crafts & Brothers' paper two days ago, but got rid of it just in time; didn't know anything about their shaky condition, either."

"It is not as honest a failure as was at first supposed."

"No, indeed; and Joe Crafts, the senior partner, is missing, and worse yet, has taken away all the available funds, leaving not even enough to pay the woman who sweeps out."

"And his brother has nothing at all; they say he was no more than a clerk after all, though he was put down as a partner."

"It's a curious case, all around, and likely to prove more so."

"That's so, for the police have done nothing as yet in the matter."

That was where the two talkers were wrong, for I was already at work on the case, and expected to unearth the swindler, for such was Joseph Crafts, beyond a doubt.

The firm of Crafts & Brother carried on a private banking business in the city, and were reputed to be very wealthy, and had always been considered reliable.

Suddenly, however, news came of a crash; bad investments, other failures, defaulting clerks, temporary inability to meet sudden demands, all these were given as causes, and the banking-house was closed.

After the disappearance of Crafts it was rumored that he had gone to a dozen different places, the only reliable information being the following:

It was the man's habit to ride in on horseback every morning and out again in the afternoon.

On the morning of the day when the failure was announced, an office boy employed in the vicinity of the park, while sweeping the steps, saw Crafts ride up and dismount, giving the bridle to the groom who stood near.

The groom handed him a letter, which he opened and read, turning his back to the man.

In a few moments the boy saw Mr. Crafts mount his horse again and gallop off at a rapid pace, saying to the groom in tones perfectly audible at that distance:

"You'd better leave at once. I shall go by first steamer; everything has gone up."

The lad did not report what he had seen and heard until the next day, and by that time the groom could not be found, and Crafts was thought to have sailed

by the Inman steamer of the day previous, as no other ocean steamer had sailed that day, and it was not likely that the man would have taken a coastwise vessel.

The brother was arrested, but he had nothing, not even spending money in his pocket, and he seemed to know nothing about the affairs of the firm, good or bad.

In the meantime the police were on the track of Joseph, and were in a fair way of running him down.

I was satisfied that he had not taken the Inman steamer, though his name on the passenger list would seem to indicate that he had.

I was confident that the man had either sent his groom away under his name, or that there was another Joseph Crafts, neither of whom knew the other.

In disguise I visited the place, a few miles outside of the city, where the banker lived, and in a rather odd manner became convinced of his presence there.

I was somewhat acquainted with the habits of the banker, and had noticed more than once a little peculiarity of his.

He was a heavy man, and had a habit of overrunning his left boot at the heel, to counteract which a steel plate covering half of the heel had been put on.

In the pathway leading up to the house from the road I saw footprints, and among them the mark of this heel, which was easily distinguishable from the other.

I knew at once that the man was at his home, and while others had been looking for him at the steamers, and sending messages to Europe for the police there to look out for him, I had come across him in the least expected place.

He left the house the next morning in disguise, and a good one it was, too, I myself being deceived by it.

There was one thing he had forgotten to change, and that was his boot with the steel heel.

I recognized the mark it made on the sand, and I followed my man all unsuspected, the rascal never dreaming that anyone was upon his track.

I followed him, making up my mind to arrest him not too hastily, but when he least expected such a movement.

I traced him to the city, and, describing him to one of my assistants, had the latter shadow him, while I looked after the other side of the case.

I had my suspicions about the groom, who, it was said, had disappeared, and I finally ran across him in a drinking saloon chatting with some of his cronies.

"They say you had something to do with the bank failure, Jim," said one.

"Not a bit. I didn't 'tend the horses that week."

"Who was it?"

"You'll not tell?"

"No, indeed."

"I'll tell you who the person was, then. It was the brother."

"Joe's brother?"

"Yes. And he's as big a scamp as the other."

"But he was arrested and proved innocent."

"He was never arrested."

"Who was, then?"

"Only the footman in disguise. I tell you the whole thing was nicely planned long ago, and now the brother has gone, and Joe will follow after the cops have got done looking for him."

"And the young one has all the money?"

"Nearly. He's the cute one o' the lot, seeming so innocent like, but really as big a rascal as ever you'd find."

"It's a wonder you'd go back on him."

"I wouldn't, but what I'm telling you now can't make any difference, 'cause they're both out of the way. Anyhow, I don't care very much. They might 've let me in for a little, having served them as many years as I did, but never a cent extra pay did Joe Crafts give me, and he knowing well enough that I could tell many a pretty story about him."

"And he's in the city yet?"

"Yes, and if they catch him he's got money enough to buy 'em off. The other fellow's got the bulk of it, and Joe is only here as a blind."

The man did not say anything else of importance, and after a while I left the place without being suspected.

I was not so sure that the rascally banker had no money with him to speak of, and that night I followed him into a noted gambling house and saw him lose heavily, many thousands of dollars passing from him to the proprietors of the game.

At last I noticed a man whisper something in his ear, and instantly he ceased playing, and a few moments later left the place in company with the other.

I followed, and was just in time to hear the stranger say, as they reached the street:

"You are mad to risk your money here! What would Arabella say?"

"Confound Arabella! Her extravagance has already ruined me. I wish I had never met her."

Arabella Montmorenci, the keeper of a gaming house, and the owner of a dozen trotters, had fascinated the banker, and had well-nigh ruined him by her extravagance.

He had feigned a failure in order to escape, and intended to go to Europe alone to get rid of supplying the frivolous Arabella with any more spare cash, having had experience enough in that line, and knowing that she could spend all he gave her.

The case became the more curious the more I followed it up, and I could not tell where it would end.

The brother had disappeared, that was certain, for the cheat was quickly discovered, and the next thing to do was to get back the stolen property.

Joe Crafts left the city for Boston, intending to take a steamer there for some point in Europe.

I followed him, and so did someone else, the brother of Arabella, who was determined that the man should not escape him.

We all met on the steamer's deck.

The brother was very angry, and reproached Joe with ingratitude, and threatened to expose him.

I waited until the steamer was ready to sail, and, not seeing anything of the rascal, went to the state room of Crafts in order to arrest him.

The door was unlocked, and I pushed it open and looked in.

The banker was lying in one of the berths, but he made no sound at my approach.

Thinking he was asleep, I put my hand on his shoulder and shook him, but he made no response.

Then I put my hand upon his face, and drew back with a start, for it was icy cold. He was stone dead, and had been so an hour or more.

I found several thousand dollars in the man's pockets, and two or three powders wrapped up in fine paper. The latter I had analyzed, and found them to be deadly poison.

I saw nothing of the brother of Arabella, and fancied that he had taken a suspicion that all was not right, and had resolved not to come to the steamer again.

I telegraphed to New York to have his sister arrested for assisting a criminal to escape, and by night she was locked up.

George Crafts, the brother of Joseph, had taken passage for Amsterdam, not Liverpool, as was supposed, there being no treaty of extradition between Holland and the United States.

He had nearly all the stolen money, amounting to only one hundred thousand dollars, and not a quarter million, as was thought, but still enough to live on very comfortably for many years.

It was not long before we arrested the woman's brother, and, suppressing all news concerning the affair, I laid a plan by which to capture George Crafts and regain the money.

I went to Amsterdam, and soon ran across him, representing myself to be his brother's friend.

By careful management I induced him to leave Holland, and the moment he had left the border had him arrested.

He had suspected this, I think, for he drew a revolver and fired at my head.

I had taken the precaution, however, to put blank cartridges in the chambers, foreseeing that the man might be troublesome, and, consequently, all the injury I received was being a little scorched by the powder.

The money was recovered, and the claims of the creditors partly settled, but the greater portion could never be paid, as the assets of the concern had always been overstated, and money had been spent for which there was no account made.

Out of the tangle, however, we made one thing clear, and that was that George Crafts was a villain, and would spend a considerable part of his life in prison.

There we were mistaken, for the fellow followed his brother's example and committed suicide the very day the prison walls closed upon him, which at once put an end to this most curious case.

FROM ALL POINTS

\$300 IN WOODEN LEG.

On his way to Chicago to buy a mechanical leg to replace the wooden one that he was wearing, Isadore Jerry was brought into court in Milwaukee on a charge of being drunk, and was fined \$5 and costs. Since the left leg was cut off by a train four years ago, he had saved up for an artificial limb, he told the court. To prove it he unscrewed the bottom of his wooden stump and pulled from the hole \$300 in bills.

CUT OFF TOE TO CURE CORN.

Jones Forsell, a retired and wealthy farmer of Grandview, Wash., has a new corn remedy. He was troubled for years by the pain of a corn. He has a neighbor who is a carpenter. Recently he went over, borrowed a chisel and adjourned to his own back yard. Placing his toe on the chopping-block, setting the chisel between joints and firmly grasping a hammer in his right hand, he cured his corn. "I'm rid of that corn," he told his wife, "but I'm also minus a toe."

BOYCOTT BOARDING-HOUSES.

Because some boarding-house keepers of Lynn, Mass., announced an advance of fifty cents a week for twenty-one meals, both for men and women, with an increase of fifteen cents for Sunday dinners, union shoe workers are preparing to boycott those places. The men plan to eat in union restaurants and lunch carts, while the women workers will cook in their rooms.

When boarders appeared for their New England Sunday breakfast of baked beans and bacon and eggs they found typewritten notices at each plate which stated that "because of the high cost of food stuffs the price of board from this time until further notice is increased fifty cents. That applies to men and women."

The present rates are \$3.50 for women and \$4 for men. Scores of boarders refused to start a new week's bill.

INDIAN ON THE CENT.

In 1835 the Government of the United States made an offer of \$1,000 for the most acceptable design to be placed upon the new cent coin soon to be issued. Some Indian chiefs traveled from the Northwest to Washington to visit the Great Father. Andrew Jackson occupied the executive chair and Martin Van Buren was Vice-President. These Indians journeyed to Philadelphia to inspect the mint, whose chief engraver was James Barton Longacre, who invited them to his house, where, to celebrate the event, a distinguished company had assembled to welcome them.

The engraver's daughter, Sarah, aged ten, greatly enjoyed the visit of her father's guests, and during the evening, to please her, one of the chiefs took his feathered helmet and war-bonnet and placed it on her head. In the company was an artist, who immediately sketched her and handed the picture to her father. Mr. Longacre, knowing of the competition for a likeness to go upon the cent projected, under the inspiration of the hour, resolved to contend for the prize offered by the Government. To his delight the officials accepted it, and the face of his daughter appeared upon the coin, which was circulated about the nation for nearly a century. It is said that there were more than 100 competitors for the prize.

Savage and civilized life was thus intermingled in the American face and the Indian headgear, remarks the Pittsburgh Leader. The face of Sarah Longacre has gone into more hands, more pockets, more homes, more stores, more banks, more schools; yes, more churches, than any other coin in the United States, if not in the world.

SUBMARINES KNOWN IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

According to researches which have been made by a French professor, it would appear that submarines have almost as hoary a past as aeroplanes, which, as is well known, involved ideas which are centuries old. It appears that submarines were built as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century. The origin of the invention is older still. Aristotle tells how Alexander the Great made use of submarines during the siege of Tyre, more than three hundred years before Christ.

A Dutchman named Cornelius Van Drebbel astounded London in 1620 with a submarine that held twelve oarsmen and some passengers, among whom was King James I.

Previous to this, in 1534, a monk suggested the idea that a ship be constructed of metal so as to be water-tight and able to resist the pressure of water. A submarine was constructed according to the monk's idea and was shown to be practicable to a certain degree.

In 1537 a ship with twenty cannon, eighty sailors and many bags of money on board blew up and sank in the port of Dieppe. Three years later a Frenchman, Jean Barrie, called Pradine, built, according to the old monk's ideas, a submarine with which he promised to rescue the bags of gold and silver from the wreck, and possibly some pieces of artillery.

The great Pascal, then a little boy, was an eyewitness to the experiments of Pradine, which were carried on till 1650 with ultimate success.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

DROUGHT HELPS HONEY CROP.

Two hundred and fifty pounds of honey in one bee gum tree is the record of the George Reed bee farm in Salina County, Kan., where 4,000 pounds of honey will be gathered this year. Reed says the dry season is responsible, the alfalfa being in bloom constantly, and the bees were able to work without delay. Reed says this year is the best honey year he ever saw and all because of the prolonged drought.

BOY WEDS HIS TEACHER.

He is sixteen years and she is twenty-two. They are married and they are happy.

Two years ago Miss Sadie Patrick of Arlington, Tenn., came to Memphis and secured a position in the public schools. She had one pupil to whom she became greatly attached. He was James L. Yarbrough, at that time fourteen years old.

This fall James was in the fifth grade. Miss Patrick was again his teacher. School ran along smoothly for a month. Then the principal noted a marriage license had been issued to James L. Yarbrough and Miss Sadie Patrick.

He questioned teacher and pupil. They admitted they had been married. The school laws do not permit married women to teach, so Mr. and Mrs. Yarbrough are making their home with the elder Mr. and Mrs. Yarbrough.

WAR HITS SMOKERS.

The cost of smoking and chewing is advancing along with the cost of living, according to John F. Whelan, vice-president of the United Cigar Stores Company, and the situation will be worse after the first of the year. Except in the case of cigars, the advance will not be a direct raise in price, Mr. Whelan says, but will mean that the number of cigarettes to a package will be less, and that the size of plugs will be cut down.

The war is partly responsible, according to Mr. Whelan. Other causes have been costly strikes, the fact that many cigar makers have gone to the munition factories, also that bands and label formerly made in Germany are now made here at increased cost, and that it costs more to make the boxes. Cigars now selling three and two for a quarter will probably be ten and fifteen cents straight after the first of January, Mr. Whelan says.

WOMAN HEADS MAJOR LEAGUE CLUB.

Mrs. Schuyler P. Britton was recently elected president of the St. Louis National League Baseball Club, to succeed her husband, whose resignation was accepted by the board of directors. Mrs. Britton is the first woman who has ever held the

presidency of a major league club. Schuyler P. Britton's resignation from his executive position is believed to have been the direct result of a suit for divorce filed by his wife. It is said Britton's resignation has been in the hands of his wife ever since he was elected to the office, several years ago.

While Mrs. Britton has always taken an active interest in the affairs of the Cardinals heretofore, she was content to remain behind the scenes, though she generally attended the annual meetings of the National League as a representative of the St. Louis club. Mrs. Britton came into baseball prominence together with the possession of the Cardinals several years ago, through the will of a late uncle, Stanley Robison. She was the first woman owner of a major league franchise.

Mrs. Britton announced at the conclusion of the meeting that Miller Huggins would be retained as manager of the club, but that there would be changes among the players.

LEA LION ANSWERS TO NAME.

At Avalon, Cal., one of the most interesting examples of tame wild animals is to be seen in the shape of a sea lion, which must weigh a quarter of a ton, if not more. This great creature I have seen on the main street of Avalon, surrounded by tourists, who were snapping kodaks at it and viewing the marine giant with open-eyed wonder, writes C. F. Holder in the September "St. Nicholas."

The sea lion, which the fishermen call Ben, is a wild animal that is the head of a rookery that has for years held ground at a point of rocks on the south end of the island. Every day these sea lions start out on a fishing trip and follow the island up the coast; but four or five of the largest, led by Ben, frequent the bay of Avalon and give daily exhibitions that amaze the many tourists who visit it.

To see a man step down onto a float and shout "Ben! Ben!" at the top of his voice, excites laughter and wonder. But in a few moments a big head appears, perhaps fifty feet from shore, then a huge animal, the size of a cow, comes up to the float and crawls upon it, or the beach, as the case may be. In summer there are too many people around and Ben will not crawl up into the street, but he will come out on the float or beach and take an albacore from the man's hand—really a remarkable exhibition.

I saw Ben on one occasion come up the beach and follow the man to the sea wall, then up a short, narrow stairway used by the bathers; then he was lured into the very street, where he stood, head in air, nose up, with a sleepy expression. When he received his fish he turned and waddled back to the water like a huge caterpillar.

THE LITTLE GEM TELEPHONE.



The transmitter in this telephone is made from the best imported parchment; with ordinary use will last a long time; can be made in any length by adding cord; the only real telephone for the money; each one put up in a neat box; fully illustrated, with full directions how to use them. Price, 12c., postpaid.

Wolff Novelty Co., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

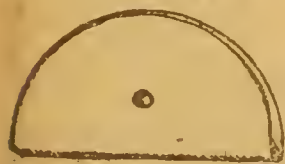
SURPRISE MOVING-PICTURE MACHINE.



It consists of a small nicked metal tube, 4 1/2 inches long, with a lens eye-view, which shows a pretty ballet girl or any other scene. Hand it to a friend who will be delighted with the first picture, tell him to turn the screw on the side of the instrument, to change the views, when a stream of water squirts in his face, much to his surprise. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, and one filling will suffice for four or five victims.

Price, 30c. each by mail, postpaid; 4 for \$1.00. Frank Smith, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

WHISTLEPHONE



This is one of the greatest musical instruments ever invented. It is made entirely of metal and is almost invisible when in use. With it, in a few moments, you can learn to play all kinds of tunes, have lots of fun, please and amuse your friends and make some money, too. Fine for either song or piano accompaniment or by itself alone. You place the whistlephone in the mouth with half circle out, place end of tongue to rounded part and blow gently as if to cool the lips. A few trials will enable one to play any tune or air.

Price 6 cents each by mail, post-paid. C. Behr, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

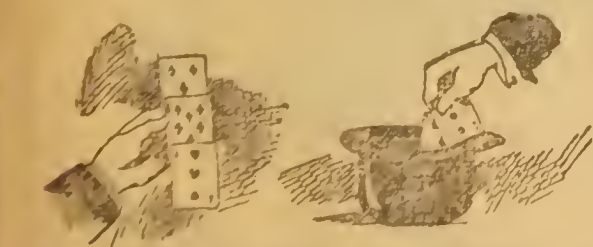
NEW SURPRISE NOVELTY.



Foxy Grandpa, Mr. Peewee and other comical faces artistically colored, to which is attached a long rubber tube, connected with a rubber ball, which can be filled with water, the rubber ball being carried in the pocket, a slight pressure on the bulb causes a long stream, the result can easily be seen.

Price, 15c., Postpaid.

Wolff Novelty Co., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



THE DEVIL'S CARD TRICK.—From three cards held in the hand anyone is asked to mentally select one. All three cards are placed in a hat and the performer removes the two that the audience did not select and passing the hat to them their card has mysteriously vanished. A great calamity highly recommended. Price, 10c.

Wolff Novelty Co., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

TOBACCO HABIT



Easily Conquered in 3 Days

Picture No. 1—Shows how tobacco has nearly wrecked a man's career. He has become nervous, dyspeptic and irritable; he cannot sleep well, has lost his energy and ambition. No. 2—The doctor says: "I'm giving you this medicine but it will do very little good, unless you stop killing yourself with tobacco." No. 3—Still a slave; another collapse. No. 4—Wife reads advertisement of Mr. Woods. No. 5—Writes for Woods' FREE BOOK. No. 6—Being convinced by multitude of proofs, he has ordered remedy which is in box postman is now delivering. No. 7—Has begun to overcome tobacco craving. Already is feeling much better; vigor and ambition returning. No. 8—Surprising improvement; all craving gone, filled with new courage and backed by good health. No. 9—Beginning anew. No. 10—Succeeding in business. No. 11—No trouble to resist temptation of tobacco in any form. No. 12—By clear-headedness, good health and energy, he has now become prosperous.

Would You Like to Quit Tobacco Quickly and Easily and Enjoy Yourself a Thousand Times Better While in Robust Health?

STOP RUINING YOUR LIFE

Why continue to commit slow suicide when you can live a really contented life, if you only get your body and nerves right? It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to rid oneself of tobacco by suddenly stopping with "will-power"—don't do it. The correct way is to eliminate nicotine poison from the system, and genuinely overcome the craving.

Tobacco is poisonous and seriously injures health in several ways, causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas belching, gnawing, or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach; constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigor, red spots on skin, throat irritation, catarrh, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, melancholy, lung trouble, impure (poisoned) blood, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, bad teeth, foul breath, lassitude, lack of ambition, weakening and falling out of hair and many other disorders.

Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco, or snuff.

Here is an opportunity to receive FREE a carefully compiled treatise on the subject, containing interesting and valuable information that you should be glad to learn about. This book tells all about the renowned **THREE DAYS' METHOD** by which thousands and thousands saved themselves from the life-wrecking tobacco habit. Full particulars, including the book on tobacco and snuff habit, will be mailed FREE TO YOU, in plain wrapper, postpaid. All you need do is merely REQUEST IT. A postcard will do. Address

EDWARD J. WOODS, 228 W. Station E, New York, N. Y.

NOTE.—To those who are injuring their health, making themselves nervous, dyspeptic, etc., by excessive use of cigarettes, cigars, pipe, snuff or chewing tobacco:—here is your opportunity to quickly and easily become your own master.

MARBLE VASE.



A clever and puzzling effect, easy to do; the apparatus can be minutely examined. Effect: A marble can be made to pass from the hand into the closed vase, which a moment before was shown empty. This is a beautiful enameled turned wood vase.

Price, 20c.

H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

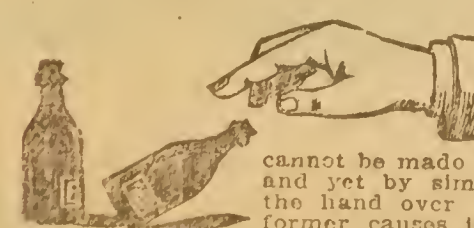
THE BUCULO CIGAR.



The most remarkable trick-cigar in the world. It smokes without tobacco, and never gets smaller. Anyone can have a world of fun with it, especially if you smoke it in the presence of a person who dislikes the odor of tobacco. It looks exactly like a fine perfect, and the smoke is so real that it is bound to deceive the closest observer.

Price, 12c. each, postpaid.

H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



The Bottle Imp.—The peculiarity of this little bottle is that it cannot be made to lie down, and yet by simply passing the hand over it, the performer causes it to do so.

This trick affords great amusement, and is of convenient size to carry about. Price, 10c.

C. Behr, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

\$ 2 to \$500 EACH paid for hundreds of old Coins. Keep ALL money dated before 1895 and send TEN cents for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your Fortune. **CLARKE COIN Co., Box 95, Le Roy, N. Y.**

HAPPY HOOLIGAN JOKER.



With this joker in the lapel of your coat, you can make a dead shot every time. Complete with rubber ball and tubing. Price, 15c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



"KNOCK-OUT" CARD TRICK.—Five cards are shown, front and back, and there are no two cards alike. You place some of them in a handkerchief and ask any person to hold them by the corners in full view of the audience. You now take the remaining cards and request anyone to name any card shown. This done, you repeat the name of the card and state that you will cause it to invisibly leave your hand and pass into the handkerchief, where it will be found among the other cards. At the word "Go!" you show that the chosen card has vanished, leaving absolutely only two cards. The handkerchief is unfolded by any person, and in it is found the identical card. Recommended very highly. Price, 10c.

H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

SECRET SERVICE

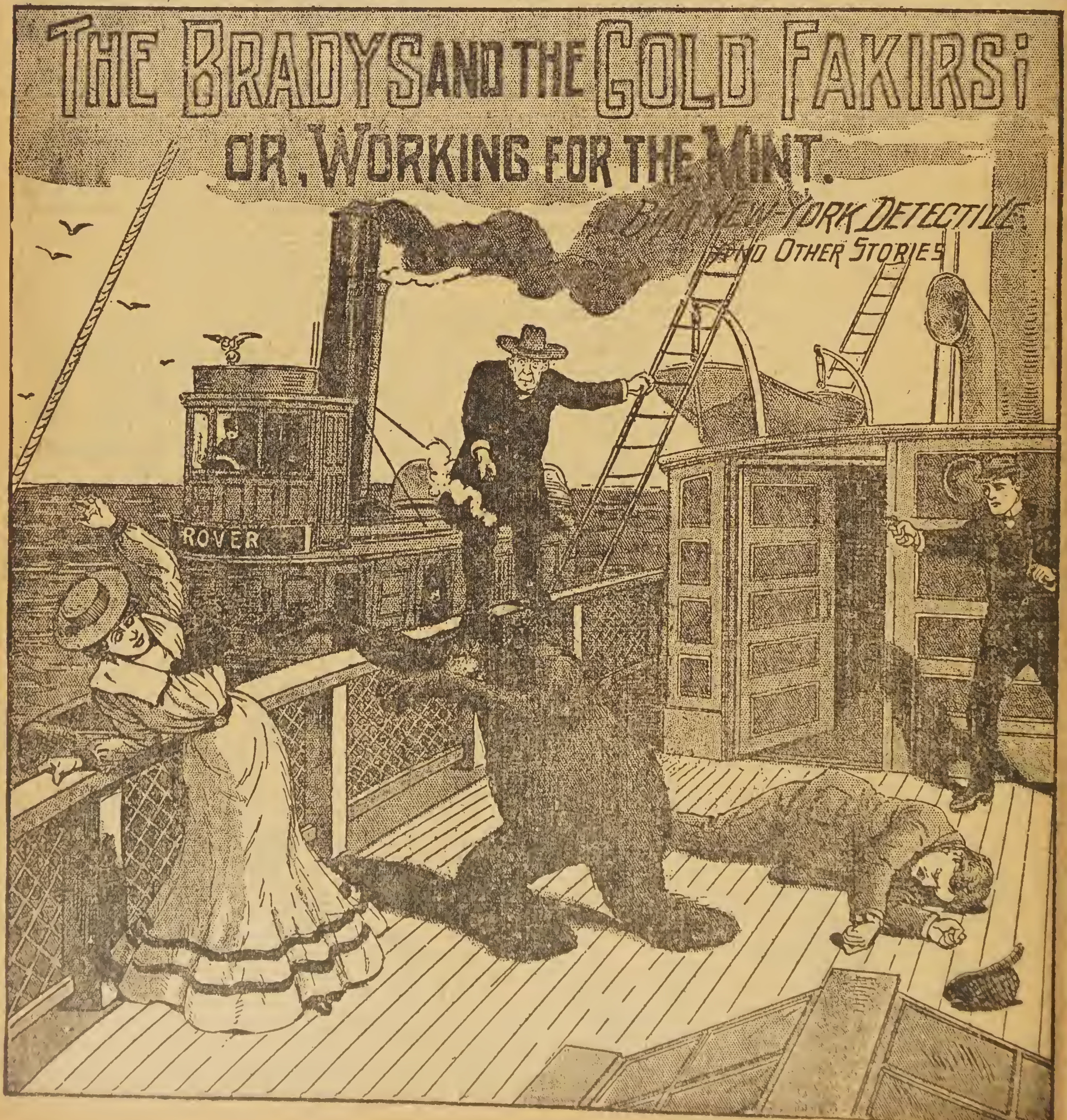
OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 168 WEST 23D STREET, NEW YORK.

No. 935.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1916.

Price 6 Cents.



WILD WEST WEEKLY

713 Young Wild West at "Coyote Camp"; or, Spoiling a Lynching Bee.
 714 Young Wild West the Lasso King; or, The Crooked Gang of "Straight" Ranch.
 715 Young Wild West's Game of Chance; or, Saved by Arietta.
 716 Young Wild West and "Cayuse Kitty"; or, The Queen of the Broncho Busters.
 717 Young Wild West's Steady Hand; or, The Shot that Made a Million.
 718 Young Wild West and the Pinte Princess; or, The Trail that Led to the Lost Land.
 719 Young Wild West's Cowboy Carnival; or, The Round-up at Roaring Ranch.
 720 Young Wild West and the Girl in Green; or, A Lively Time at Silver Plume.
 721 Young Wild West's Long Range Shot; or, Arietta's Ride for Life.
 722 Young Wild West and the Stranded Show; or, Waking the Prairie Pilgrims.
 723 Young Wild West's Life at Stake; or, The Strategy of Arietta.
 724 Young Wild West's Prairie Pioneers; or, Fighting the Way to the Golden Loop.
 725 Young Wild West and Nevada Nan; or, The Wild Girl of the Sierras.
 726 Young Wild West in the Bad Lands; or, Hemmed in by Redskins.

727 Young Wild West at Nugget Flats; or, Arietta's Struck Luck.
 728 Young Wild West's Grizzly Hunt; or, The Rival Ranger of the Rockies.
 729 Young Wild West's Buckskin Brigade; or, Helping the Cavalrymen.
 730 Young Wild West at Magic Mark; or, Showing Them How to Run the Camp.
 731 Young Wild West's Duel With Death; or, Arietta to the Rescue.
 732 Young Wild West's Cowboy Band; or, The Tune They Played in Deadwood.
 733 Young Wild West's Indian Scout; or, Arietta and the Paying Maiden.
 734 Young Wild West and the "Salted" Mine; or, The Double Game for a Million.
 735 Young Wild West's Overland Route; or, The Masked Ball of Death Pass.
 736 Young Wild West's Iron Grip; or, Settling a Cowboy Feud.
 737 Young Wild West's Last Chance; or, Arietta's Narrow Escape.
 738 Young Wild West and the Gold Grabbers; or, The Fight for the Widow's Claim.
 739 Young Wild West and the Branded Band; or, The Scourge of Skeleton Skit.
 740 Young Wild West's Double Danger; or, The Sign of the Secret Seven.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 5 cents per copy, in money or postage stamps, by
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher. - - - - - 168 West 23d St., N. Y.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS

of our weeklies and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Write out and fill in your Order and send it to us with the price of the weeklies you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, - - - - - 168 West 23d St., N. Y.

OUR TEN-CENT HAND BOOKS

No. 46. HOW TO MAKE AND USE ELECTRICITY.—A description of the wonderful uses of electricity and electro magnetism; together with full instructions for making Electric Toys, Batteries, etc. By George Trebel, A.M., M.D. Containing over fifty illustrations.

No. 47. HOW TO BREAK, RIDE AND DRIVE A HORSE.—A complete treatise on the horse. Describing the most useful horses for business, the best horses for the road; also valuable recipes for diseases peculiar to the horse.

No. 48. HOW TO BUILD AND SAIL CANOES.—A handy book for boys, containing full directions for constructing canoes and the most popular manner of sailing them. Fully illustrated.

No. 49. HOW TO DEBATE.—Giving rules for conducting debates, outlines for debates, questions for discussion, and the best sources for procuring information on the question given.

No. 50. HOW TO STUFF BIRDS AND ANIMALS. A valuable book, giving instructions in collecting, preparing, mounting and preserving birds, animals and insects.

No. 51. HOW TO DO TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Containing explanations of the general principles of sleight-of-hand applicable to card tricks; of card tricks with ordinary cards, and not requiring sleight-of-hand; of tricks involving sleight-of-hand, or the use of specially prepared cards. Illustrated.

No. 52. HOW TO PLAY CARDS.—Giving the rules and full directions for playing Euchre, Cribbage, Casino, Forty-Five, Rounce, Pedro Sancho, Draw Poker, Auction Pitch, All Fours, and many other popular games of cards.

No. 53. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS.—A wonderful little book, telling you how to write to your sweetheart, your father, mother, sister, brother, employer; and, in fact, everybody and anybody you wish to write to.

No. 54. HOW TO KEEP AND MANAGE PETS.—Giving complete information as to the manner and method of raising, keeping, taming, breeding, and managing all kinds of pets; also giving full instructions for making cages, etc. Fully explained by twenty eight illustrations.

No. 55. HOW TO COLLECT STAMPS AND COINS.—Containing valuable information regarding the collecting and arranging of stamps and coins. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 56. HOW TO BECOME AN ENGINEER.—Containing full instructions how to become a locomotive engineer; also directions for building a model locomotive; together with a full description of everything an engineer should know.

No. 60. HOW TO BECOME A PHOTOGRAPHER.—Containing useful information regarding the Camera and how to work it; also how to make Photographic Magic Lantern Slides and other Transparencies. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 62. HOW TO BECOME A WEST POINT MILITARY CADET.—Explains how to gain admittance, course of Study, Examinations, Duties, Staff of Officers, Post Guard, Police Regulations, Fire Department, and all a boy should know to be a cadet. By Lu Senarens.

No. 63. HOW TO BECOME A NAVAL CADET.—Complete instructions of how to gain admission to the Annapolis Naval Academy. Also containing the course of instruction, description of grounds and buildings, historical sketch, and everything a boy should know to become an officer in the United States Navy. By Lu Senarens.

No. 64. HOW TO MAKE ELECTRICAL MACHINES.—Containing full directions for making electrical machines, induction coils, dynamos, and many novel toys to be worked by electricity. By R. A. R. Bennet. Fully illustrated.

No. 65. MULDOON'S JOKES.—The most original joke book ever published, and it is brimful of wit and humor. It contains a large collection of songs, jokes, conundrums, etc., of Terrence Muldoon, the great wit, humorist, and practical joker of the day.

No. 66. HOW TO DO PUZZLES.—Containing over three hundred interesting puzzles and conundrums, with key to same. A complete book. Fully illustrated.

No. 67. HOW TO DO ELECTRICAL TRICKS.—Containing a large collection of instructive and highly amusing electrical tricks, together with illustrations. By A. Anderson.

No. 68. HOW TO DO CHEMICAL TRICKS.—Containing over one hundred highly amusing and instructive tricks with chemicals. By A. Anderson. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 69. HOW TO DO SLEIGHT-OF-HAND.—Containing over fifty of the latest and best tricks used by magicians. Also containing the secret of second sight. Fully illustrated.

No. 70. HOW TO MAKE MAGIC TOYS.—Containing full directions for making Magic Toys and devices of many kinds. Fully illustrated.

No. 71. HOW TO DO MECHANICAL TRICKS.—Containing complete illustrations for performing over sixty Mechanical Tricks. Fully illustrated.

No. 72. HOW TO DO SIXTY TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Embracing all of the latest and most deceptive card tricks, with illustrations.

No. 73. HOW TO DO TRICKS WITH NUMBERS.—Showing many curious tricks with figures and the magic of numbers. By A. Anderson. Fully illustrated.

No. 74. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS CORRECTLY.—Containing full instructions for writing letters on almost any subject; also rules for punctuation and composition, with specimen letters.

No. 75. HOW TO BECOME A CONJURER.—Containing tricks with Dominoes, Dice, Cups and Balls, Hats, etc. Embracing thirty-six illustrations. By A. Anderson.

No. 76. HOW TO TELL FORTUNES BY THE HAND.—Containing rules for telling fortunes by the aid of lines of the hand, or the secret of palmistry. Also the secret of telling future events by aid of moles, marks, scars, etc. Illustrated.

No. 77. HOW TO DO FORTY TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Containing deceptive Card Tricks as performed by leading conjurers and magicians. Arranged for home amusement. Fully illustrated.

No. 78. HOW TO DO THE BLACK ART.—Containing a complete description of the mysteries of Magic and Sleight-of-hand, together with many wonderful experiments. By A. Anderson. Illustrated.

No. 79. HOW TO BECOME AN ACTOR.—Containing complete instructions how to make up for various characters on the stage; together with the duties of the Stage Manager, Prompter, Scenic Artist and Property Man.

No. 80. GUS WILLIAMS' JOKE BOOK.—Containing the latest jokes, anecdotes and funny stories of this world-renowned German comedian. Sixty-four pages; handsome colored cover, containing a half-tone photo of the author.

No. 81. HOW TO MESMERIZE.—Containing the most approved method of mesmerism; animal magnetism, or, magnetic healing. By Prof. Leo Hugo Koch, A.C.S., author of "How to Hypnotize," etc.

No. 82. HOW TO DO PALMISTRY.—Containing the most approved methods of reading the lines on the hand, together with a full explanation of their meaning. Also explaining phrenology, and the key of telling characters by the bumps on the head. By Leo Hugo Koch, A.C.S. Fully illustrated.

No. 83. HOW TO HYPNOTIZE.—Containing valuable and instructive information regarding the science of hypnotism. Also explaining the most approved methods which are employed by the leading hypnotists of the world. By Leo Hugo Koch, A.C.S.

No. 84. HOW TO BECOME AN AUTHOR.—Containing information regarding choice of subjects, the use of words and the manner of preparing and submitting manuscripts. Also containing valuable information as to the neatness, legibility and general composition of manuscripts.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 10c per copy, or 3 for 25c, in money or postage stamps, by
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher. - - - - - 168 West 23d St., N. Y.